TERROR LAY BEYOND THE GRAVE ... see page 6

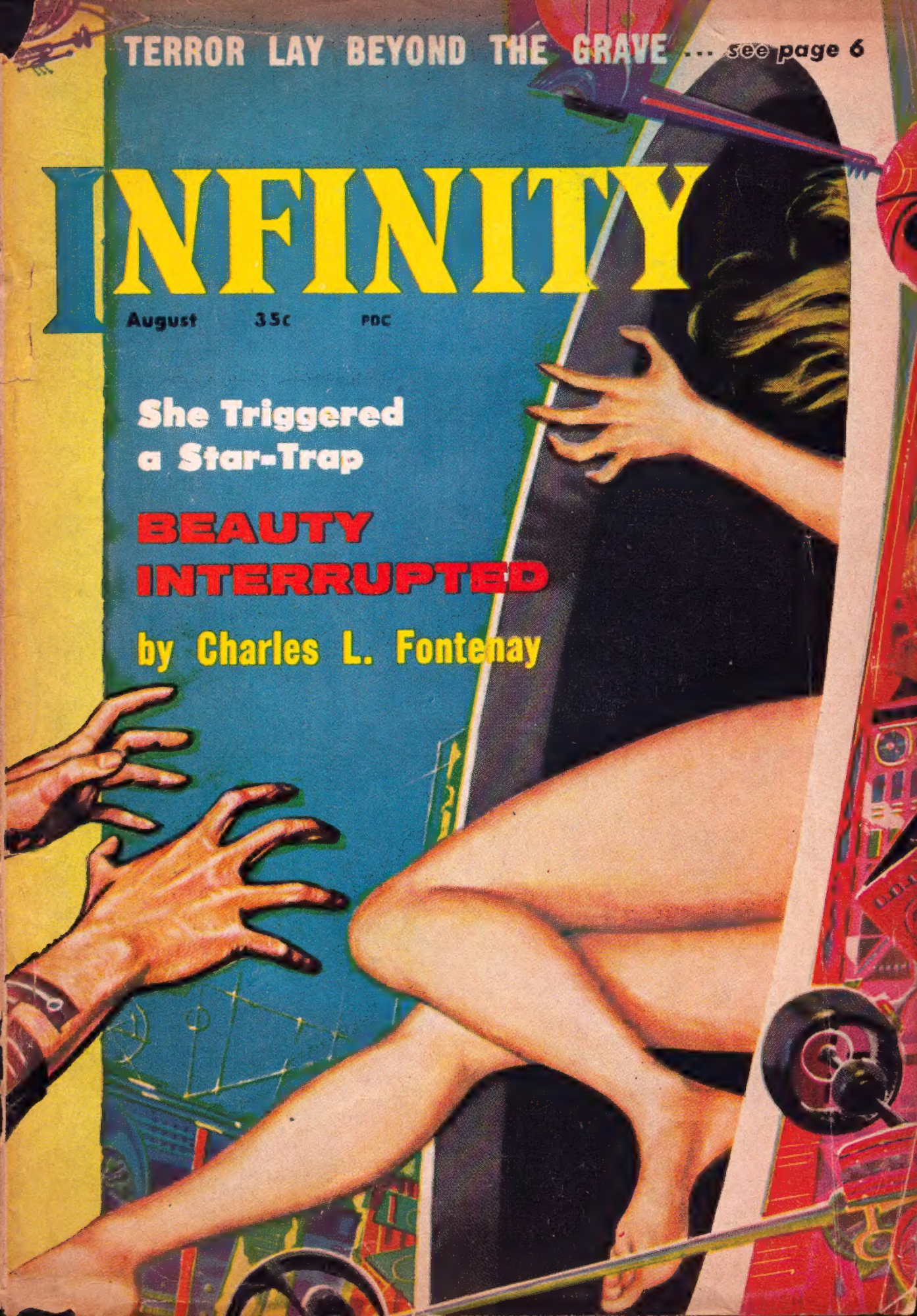
INFINITY

August 35c PDC

She Triggered a Star-Trap

BEAUTY INTERRUPTED

by Charles L. Fontenay



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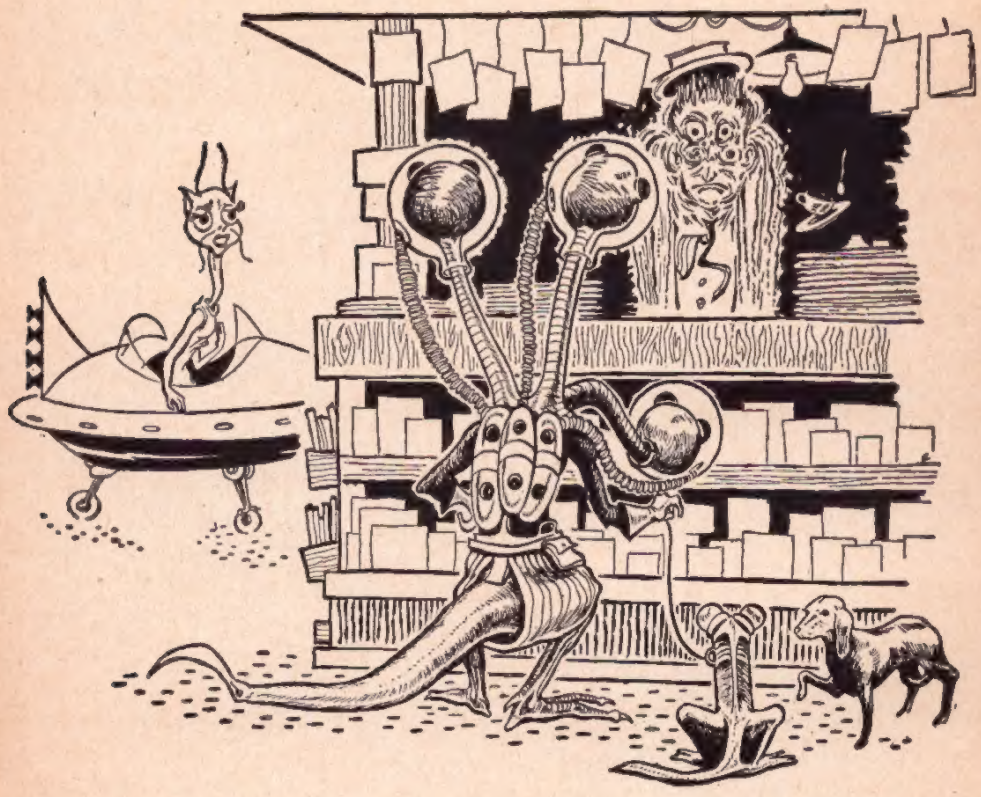

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Remember, monsters of distinction have subscriptions. See full details inside.

SCIENCE FICTION

∞ Infinity

August, 1958

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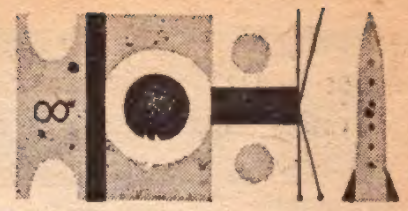
By the editor



ABOUT FACE

LAST ISSUE, gloom hung heavy around this department, and I led off with the announcement that INFINITY was now on a bi-monthly schedule.

Forget it. Things have changed fast. Effective with next issue, INFINITY will be on a monthly schedule at long last.

This does not necessarily mean that the economic slump is over; nor have we been indulging in complicated world-wide financial maneuverings—or heroin. We have decided, simply, to proceed on an all or nothing basis. We're gambling on the ideas that readers would rather have a monthly magazine, other things being equal, that they are more likely to buy it regularly if the purchase becomes a monthly habit, and that there are still plenty of people around who like good, honest science fiction.

The chips are down. We're going to do our utmost to give you the best possible stories—of *any* length—in the best possible format 12 times a year. We have a fairly definite policy as to what constitutes a good science fiction story (even though we've never seen fit to go on for page after page describing and defining that policy), but as long as a story *is* science fiction and does a good job of entertaining the reader, we won't throw it out because of taboos.

We are not going to turn INFINITY into a flying saucer magazine or a fact-science magazine. We're not going to try to sell it to people who don't like science fiction and never will like it. We like sf; if you don't, there are no hard feelings, but you may as well take your business elsewhere.

On the other hand, if you do like sf, please buy the blasted thing. It's financially impossible, not to mention profoundly depressing, to continue putting out a magazine that nobody buys. Besides, we have some awfully good stories coming up . . .

HAVE YOU made your reservations for the Solacon yet? As you undoubtedly know, this is the 16th World Science Fiction Convention, which is to be held at the Alexandria Hotel in Los An-

geles, August 29 through September 1, 1958. For fans and professionals alike, the big convention is always the event of the year, and the 1958 affair in particular shows signs of being worth going out of your way to attend.

The Solacon committee has planned some very fine innovations. In past years, the banquet has been one of the most memorable features of each con, with people like Isaac Asimov and Robert Bloch indulging in funnier comedy routines than you'll ever see on TV, and the con's official guest of honor (this year it's Richard Matheson) delivering his major speech. However, some banquets in recent years have been too expensive for all the conventioneers to attend and the Solacon boys have vowed to make sure that their banquet is available to all. Therefore, you'll have a choice of three main courses, broiled chicken at $3.25, lobster newburgh at $3.50, or prime ribs of beef at $4.50. If you plan to attend the banquet, send your reservations now to Anna Sinclare Moffatt, 10202 Belcher, Downey, California.

Of course, the other traditional sf con features like the masquerade party and the voting for the following year's convention site (this year Chicago, Dallas and Detroit will be bidding) will be trotted out in proper order and presented with all possible flourishes. There will be serious speeches, unusual entertainment, and plenty of just plain partying and fun. If you've never been to a science fiction convention before, you'll have the time of your life; if you have, I don't have to tell you about it. So start planning for a fabulous Labor Day weekend by making your hotel reservations (directly to the Hotel Alexandria, 5th & Spring, Los Angeles, or through Len J. Moffatt, 10202 Belcher, Downey) and joining the sponsoring World Science Fiction Society ($1.00 to Rick Sneary, 2962 Santa Ana Street, South Gate, California) now. I'll see you there!

AFTER ALL the good news, I am forced to change hats again briefly and report a bit of bad. *Science Fiction Adventures,* INFINITY's companion magazine, has been suspended. This is not necessarily permanent, as we are looking for a means of revival and have high hopes. Meanwhile, subscribers who don't want to wait may have the balance of their subscriptions transferred to INFINITY, or their money returned, if they will notify us of their wishes. And, naturally, new developments will be reported here.

—LTS

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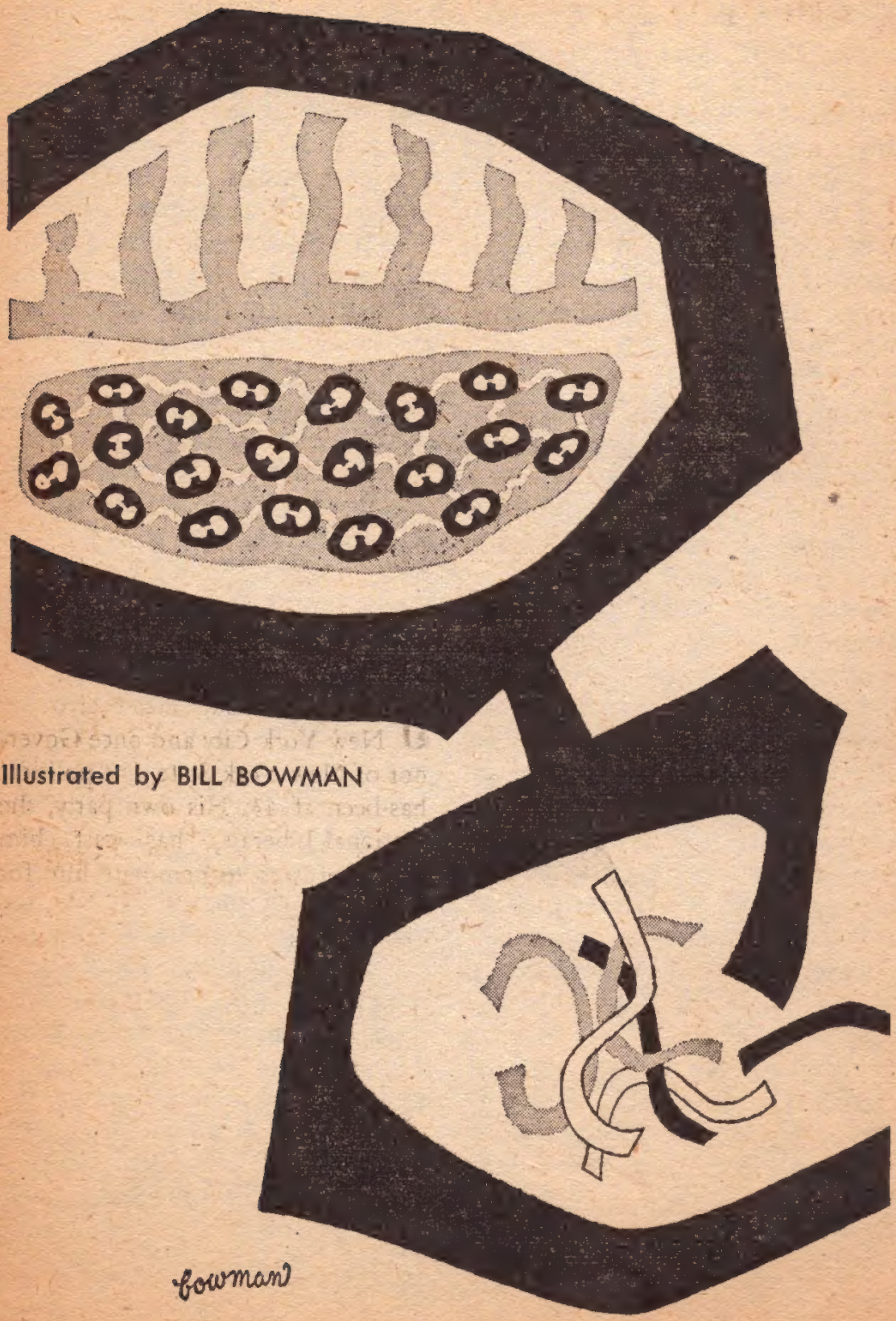

Illustrated by BILL BOWMAN

The grave itself no longer held terror for humanity. The idea of reanimating the dead did, however!

Part 2

recalled to Life

By ROBERT SILVERBERG

Synopsis of Part One:

JAMES HARKER, once Mayor of New York City and once Governor of New York State, is a political has-been at 43. His own party, the National-Liberals, has cast him aside, refusing to nominate him for re-election in the 2032 voting, because of his stubborn and independent tactics.

He has returned to the semi-obscurity of private law practice. Occupied in settling the estate of Richard Bryant, a dying old hero of early space travel, Harker is approached one day by a gangling, awkward man who introduces himself as Dr. Benedict Lurie of the Beller Research Laboratories. Lurie

puts a strange and surprising proposition to him.

It seems that the Beller Labs, working secretly on a private grant the past eight years, have developed a process which can restore to life human beings who have been dead less than twenty-four hours. They wish to engage Harker as their legal consultant. Despite his wife's uneasiness and his own inner doubts, he allows himself to be taken to the Beller Laboratories headquarters in Litchfield, New Jersey, and is given a demonstration of the process in action which convinces him that their process is genuine. He accepts the job.

But he is not pleased with the present Beller staff. The lab director, Dr. Martin Raymond, is a sincere and competent man—but Harker takes an immediate dislike to the group's publicity agent, the brash and impatient Cal Mitchison, and to a researcher named David Klaus who seems to be angling for Raymond's job.

Still, he agrees to devote himself full-time to serving as legal advisor, and withdraws himself from other business commitments despite the strenuous warning of his friend and partner, Bill Kelly. He visits a Roman Catholic priest, Father Carteret, and learns from him that the Church will probably oppose reanimation on theological grounds; swearing Carteret to secrecy, Harker leaves, realizing he will have potent forces to contend with in securing the legalization of the Beller process.

He attempts to have Mitchison, the publicity agent, discharged, but in this he is blocked by Simeon Barchet, an ultra-conservative opponent of his who administers the Beller Fund and thus controls the purse of the organization. Temporarily abandoning the idea, Harker journeys to Albany to see his successor as Governor, Leo Winstead, in hopes of getting Winstead's support in the coming political struggle over reanimation. Winstead, though, tells him that the thing is too hot to handle, and refuses to commit himself until higher-ranking members of their party have decided on National-Liberal policy.

Harker then makes plans to go to Washington and appeal to Clyde Thurman, senior Senator from New York and patriarch of the National-Liberal party. The night before his departure, Harker learns that his aged client Richard Bryant has died, and that his children, led by his oldest son Jonathan, are striving to break the will Harker had written for him. The following morning Harker is at the airport when he receives an emergency call from Mart Raymond, who tells him to come to the lab in Litchfield immediately. Mitchison and Klaus have issued an unauthorized statement prematurely informing the world of the existence of the Beller Process for reanimation. The laboratory is swarming with reporters.

Hastening there, Harker finds the place in confusion. Mitchison and Klaus have disappeared. And when Harker suggests a public demonstration, Raymond confesses for the first time that the process does not always work—and when it does work, one time out of six the brain is not revived with the body.

This, of course, eliminates the possibility of a public demonstration, which would, Harker now realizes, be like a game of Russian Roulette, with one chance in six that the whole show would blow up in their faces. As he considers the situation, Barchet enters and informs him that the reporters are growing restless. He composes a hasty statement disowning Mitchison, crediting Raymond as head of the project, and declaring that full details of the technique will be released as soon as they are ready. Then he locates the nearest vidset, to see how the news is being treated.

The original announcement has already pushed all other news into the background. Thurman and others are calling for an immediate Senate investigation with a view to placing the reanimation technique under Federal regulation. The President and Vice-President are treating the news calmly. But there is one large and vitally important question still to be answered. That question is: how will the man in the street react? Harker wishes he knew.

Now Read Part Two:

RECALLED TO LIFE

CHAPTER IX

HARKER held his first news-conference at three-thirty that afternoon, in the hastily-rigged room that was now his Litchfield office.

By that time, it had occurred to him that he had become not only the legal adviser of the laboratories, but the public spokesman, publicity director, and chairman of the board as well. Everyone, Raymond included, seemed perfectly willing to delegate responsibility to him.

He made a list of eight selected media representatives—three newspapers, both press services, two video networks and one radio network, and invited them to send men to his conference. No others were allowed in.

He told them very concisely what the Beller technique was, how it had been developed, and what it could do. He used a few technical terms that he had picked up from his weekend reading. He did not mention the fact that the technique was not without flaws.

When he had finished his explanation, he called for questions. Surprisingly few were forthcoming. The news seemed to have stilled the tongues of even these veteran reporters.

At the close of the conference he said, "Headquarters for further Beller news will be right

here. I'll try to make myself available for comment about the same time every afternoon."

He watched them go. He wondered how much of what he had said would reach the public undistorted, and how much would emerge in garbled and sensationalized form.

Toward evening, he started finding out.

Harker reached his home in Larchmont about seven that evening, utterly exhausted. Lois was at the door, anxious-faced, tense.

"Jim! I've been listening to the news all day. So have the boys. Your name's been mentioned every time."

"That's nice," Harker said wearily. He unsnapped his shoes and nodded hello to his sons, who stared at him strangely as if he had undergone some strange transformation during the day.

"I'll be spending most of my time at Litchfield until things get calmer," he said. "I may even have to sleep out there for a while."

The phone rang suddenly. Harker started to go for it, then changed his mind and said, "Find out who it is, first. If it's anybody official tell them I'm not home yet. Except Raymond."

Lois nodded and glided off toward the phone alcove. When she returned, she looked even more pale, more tense.

"Who was it?"

"Some—some crank. There've been a lot of those calls today, Jim."

He tightened his lips. "I'll have the number changed tomorrow. Nuisances."

The late editions of two of the New York papers lay on the hassock near his chair. He picked up the Seventh Edition of the *Star-Post*. A red-inked banner said, CAN LIFE BE RESTORED? READ NOBEL WINNER'S OPINION!

Harker glanced at the article. It was by Carlos Rodriguez, the Peruvian poet, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2018. Evidently it was a philosophical discussion of man's right to bring back the dead. Harker read about three paragraphs, then abruptly lost interest when another headline at the lower right-hand corner caught his eye. It said,

RICK BRYANT REMAINS DEAD, SAY SPACE PIONEER'S HEIRS

New York, May 20—The body of 73-year-old Richard Bryant, early hero of the space age, will be cremated on schedule tomorrow morning, according to a family spokesman. Commenting on the growing public sentiment that the famed Bryant be granted a reprieve from death for his epochal flight to Mars, Jonathan Bryant, his oldest son, declared:

"The feeling of my family is that my father should go to eternal rest. He was an old and sick man and frequently expressed the desire to sleep forever. We emphatically will not subject his remains to the dubious claims of the so-called reanimators currently in the headlines."

Harker looked up.

"Listen to this hogwash, Lois!" He read her the article, bearing down with sardonic malice on Jonathan's more cynical remarks.

She nodded. "I heard about it before. Seems some people got up a quick petition to bring old Bryant back to life. Jonathan's statement was broadcast about five this afternoon."

Scowling, Harker said, "You can bet they'll rush him off to the crematorium in a hurry, now. They waited four years for him to die, and they'd be damned before they let him be brought back to life!"

The phone rang again. Lois slipped away to answer it, while Harker busied himself with the papers. She returned in a moment, looking puzzled, and said, "It's a Father Carteret. He begged me to let him talk to you. What should I tell him?"

"Never mind. I'll talk to him."

He picked up in the foyer, where the phone was audio-only. "Father Carteret? Jim Harker speaking."

"Hello there, Jim." Carteret sounded troubled. "I—I guess you meant what you said, that day you saw me. It's all over the papers."

"I know. Some knucklehead sprang the thing prematurely and we're stuck with it now."

"I thought I'd let you know that ecclesiastic circles are in a dither," Carteret said. "The Archbishop's been on the phone to Rome half the day."

Harker's throat tightened. "Any news?"

"Afraid so. The Vatican has issued a hands-off order: no Catholic is to go near your process in any way whatever until the Church has had ample time to explore the implications. Which means a few months or a few centuries; there's no telling."

"So it's a condemnation, then?"

"Pretty much so," Carteret agreed softly. "Until it's determined whether or not reanimation is sinful, no Catholic can let a member of his family be reanimated—or even work in your laboratories. I hope everything works out for you, Jim. There's nothing you can do now but stick to your guns, is there?"

"No," Harker said. "I guess not."

He thanked the priest for the

advance information and hung up. Storm-clouds were beginning to gather already. But his earlier mood of gloom and desperation had washed away, he found.

He knew why. The battle had been joined. No more behind-the-scenes skulking; he was out in the open as the standard-bearer of Beller Labs. It promised to be a rough fight, but that didn't scare him.

"This is my second chance," he said to Lois.

She smiled palely. "I don't understand, Jim."

"I was elected Governor of New York on a reform platform that nobody in the party organization took seriously except me. I waded in and started to make reforms, and I got my teeth rammed down my throat for it. Okay. I lost round one. But now I'm in the thick of the fight again, fighting against ignorance and fear and hysteria. Maybe I'll lose again—but at least I'll have tried."

She touched his arm, almost timidly. Harker realized that he had never really seen into his wife before: seen the contradictions in her, the caution, the timidity, and the core of toughness that was there too.

"This time you'll win, Jim," she said simply.

IT DIDN'T look that way in the morning.

THURMAN SPEARHEADS REANIMATION INQUIRY, the *Times* announced, and the story revealed that Senator Clyde Thurman (N-L, N.Y.) had urged immediate Congressional investigation of the claims of Beller Research Laboratories, and from the tone of Thurman's statements it was obvious that he was hostile to the whole idea of reanimation. *"Sinful . . . possibly a menace to the fabric of society . . ."* were two of the terms quoted in the newspaper.

The *Times* also printed a full page of extracts from editorials of other newspapers throughout the country, plus a few comments from overseas papers that had arrived in time for the early editions.

The prevailing newspaper sentiment was one of caution. The East Coast papers generally suggested that careful scrutiny be applied to the alleged statements of Beller Labs before such a process be used on any wide scale. The Far West papers called for immediate scientific study of the Beller achievement, and most of them implied that it would be a tremendous boon to humanity if the claims were found to be true.

The Midwest papers, though, took a different approach, in general. The Chicago *Tribune* declared: *"We fear that this new advance of science may instead*

be a step backward, that it may sound the trumpet-call for the decline of civilization as we know it. A society without the fear of death is one without the fear of God"—and so on for nearly a full column.

The overseas notices were mixed: the Manchester *Guardian* offered cautious approval, the London *Daily Mirror* ringing condemnation. From France came puzzled admiration for American scientific prowess; the Germans applauded the discovery, while no word was forthcoming from Russia at the moment. The Vatican statement was about what Carteret had predicted it would be.

He reached the Litchfield headquarters about quarter-past-ten that morning. There was the usual gaggle of newsmen cluttering up the highway, even though the skies held a definite threat of rain. However, someone had had enough sense to rope off the approach to the laboratory grounds, and so he had no trouble getting past the gauntlet of reporters and into the area.

Raymond and Lurie were in the office when Harker got there. They had a huge pile of newspapers spread out all over the floor.

"Makes interesting reading," Harker said amiably.

Raymond looked up. "We never expected this, Jim. We never expected anything like this."

Harker shrugged. "Death is the most important word in the language, right after birth. What comes in between is immaterial; everybody goes through his days remembering that all his life is just a preparation for the moment of his death. You've changed all that. Did you expect the world to take it calmly?"

Lurie said, "Show him the letters, Mart."

Raymond sprang to his feet and shoved a thick file-folder at Harker. "Take a look at these, will you? It's enough to break your heart."

"They come in truckloads," Lurie said. "The Litchfield postmaster is running hourly deliveries down to us because he does not have room for the stuff up there."

Harker reached into the folder and pulled out a letter at random. It was written painstakingly by hand on blue-lined yellow paper. He read it.

Dear Sirs,

You will probably throw this letter in the wastebasket but I beg you to consider it sincerely. My wife age 29 and the mother of our four children is sick in the Hospital with cancer and the Dr. says she will not live more than 1 more week.

We have all been praying for

her but so far she shows no sign of getting well and does not recognize us. I read of your miracle discovery in this morning's paper and hope now you can bring my Lucy back to life when she is gone. I enclose a self-addressed envelope so you can let me know if such would be possible, I will immediately upon her death bring her to you so you can give her back to me. I speak for our children Charles age 6 Peggy age 4 Clara age almost 3 and Betsy age fourteen months. May God bless all of you and keep you from suffering what I have been suffering, and I will live in hope of hearing from you.

Your gratefully,
Charles Mikkelsen
R.F.D. #1,
Delaware, Minne.

Harker put the letter down, feeling a strange sense of bitter compassion. He said nothing.

Raymond said, "We have hundreds like that. Some of the damndest things, too. People with relatives dead ten years want to dig them up and bring them to us."

Harker shook his head. "There's no chance you can help any of these people? How about this woman?"

"The cancer one? Not a chance. If it's as bad as he says it is, the malignancy has probably metastasized right up and down her body by now. Maybe we could bring her back to life, but we couldn't keep her alive afterward."

"I see. How about other diseases?"

Raymond shrugged. "If the organic damage is beyond repair, we can't do a thing. But if it's repairable, you can figure a good chance of success. Take a patient with cardiac tissue scarred by repeated attacks. One more attack will finish him—and so would any operation to correct the condition. But now we can 'kill' him ourselves, install an artificial heart, and reanimate. He could live another thirty years that way."

"In other words—"

The phone rang. Raymond swiveled around and scooped it lightly off its cradle without activating the video. He frowned, then said, "Yes. Yes. I get you. No, we won't make any such concessions. Go ahead, then. Sue, if you like. We'll countersue."

He hung up.

"What the blazes was *that*?" Harker demanded.

"Do you know a lawyer named Phil Gerhardt?"

Harker thought for a moment, then said, "Sure. He's a flashy lawsuit man, about as honest as snow in the Sahara. What about him?"

"He just called," Raymond

said, scratching the lobe of one ear thoughtfully. "Seems he's representing Mitchison and Klaus. They got their dismissal notices and they're suing for a million bucks plus control of the Labs. Isn't that lovely?"

CHAPTER X

HARKER looked up the phone number of Gerhardt's New York office, called, and spoke briefly with the lawyer. It was not a very pleasant conversation. Gerhardt seemed almost offensively bubbling with confidence, gloating as he informed Harker that it was only a matter of days before the court tossed Raymond and Harker out of control of Beller Labs and reinstated Klaus and Mitchison. No, Harker was told, he would *not* be given the present whereabouts of the two dismissed employees. And yes, the suit had already been filed—control of the labs and $1,000,000 in punitive damages.

"Okay," Harker said. "I'll prepare a countersuit against your clients on grounds of malfeasance, insubordination, and half a dozen other things. I don't mind fighting, Gerhardt."

He hung up. After a moment's thought he pulled a sheet of note paper from a desk drawer and started to jot down notes for the counter-offensive. This was an additional nuisance; things grew more complicated by the moment.

And Gerhardt was a prominent member of the American-Conservative Party's national committee. Harker could see the battle-lines beginning to form—with Klaus and Mitchison, Gerhardt, the American-Conservatives, the organized churches, Jonathan Bryant, and Senator Thurman on one side, and, at the moment, nobody but Harker, Raymond, and the staff of Beller Labs on the other.

During the day, tension rose at the Litchfield headquarters. The phone rang constantly; from time to time the mail-truck arrived with more letters, and Harker found it necessary to clear out one of the less important lab rooms to store them.

"Have a couple of men start going through them," he told Lurie. The gangling biologist had slipped easily into the role of messenger-boy and general go-between. "Have all the letters pleading for revivification of long-dead relatives burned immediately. Likewise the ones asking for miracles we can't perform, like that cancer business."

"How about the abusive ones?"

"Save those," Harker said. "It helps to know who our enemies are."

The afternoon papers again devoted most of their front-page

space to the news, and the *Times* in addition ran a well-handled four-page symposium in which many noted scientists discussed the entire concept of reanimation with varying degrees of insight. Harker skimmed through it rapidly and paled when he came across a comment by Dr. Louis F. Santangelo of Johns Hopkins. He read it aloud to Raymond:

"There is the distinct possibility that death causes irremediable damage to the brain. So far the Beller researchers have been extremely silent on the subject of the mental after-effects of reanimation. We must consider the chance that the process may produce living but mindless bodies —in short, walking corpses, or the zombies of legend."

Raymond looked up, troubled. "Santangelo's a brain surgeon, and a good one. Too damn good, Jim. He's smack on the nose."

Harker shook his head. "I don't like this for two reasons. One is that it happens to be accurate; two is that it puts the 'zombie' stigma again, this time thanks to a reputable scientist." He reached for a fresh sheet of note paper. "Mart, give me the figures on human reanimations so far, will you?"

"To date seventy-one attempts. Successful resuscitation in sixty-seven cases."

"Uh-huh. And how many of your sixty-seven suffered no mental after-effects?"

"Sixty-one," Raymond said.

"Which leaves six zombies." Harker felt a sudden chill. The frenzy of the first few days of publicity had left him no time to discover some of the vital information about the laboratory. "What did you do with the six?"

"What could we do? We chloroformed them and returned them to the source. It was the merciful thing to do—and it's no crime to kill a man who's already been pronounced dead."

"Where'd you get these seventy-one?"

Raymond looked evasive. "Locally. We got a few from a hospital in Jersey City. That's where we got the man you saw revived. Some came from auto accidents in the neighborhood. Medical supply houses, too. Three of the bodies were of staff-men at the labs who died naturally."

"And where are the sixty-one successful revivees?" Harker asked.

"It's all in the records. Twelve of them are in hospitals, recuperating. Death really jolts the nervous system, you know. It takes two or three months to make a full recovery. Twenty have returned to normal life. Six of these don't even know they were dead, incidentally. We keep careful watch over them."

"How about the rest?"

"The recent ones are still on

the premises, in Lab B. I guess I didn't get a chance to show you the ward."

"I guess not," Harker said wryly. "Well, we're going to have to issue a general statement on your experiments so far. Get Vogel and Smathers to write it up, and I'll revise it into releasable form. Tell them not to say anything about the six idiots, but it's okay to mention the fact that four of the cadavers couldn't be revived."

VOGEL delivered the first draft of the statistical summary about one-thirty that afternoon. Harker read it through once, made a couple of changes, and typed it out. He stressed the fact that many of the reanimatees had returned to normal life. He did not mention that six of the revivals had been unsuccessful, and that the patient had had to be destroyed.

The release was mimeographed and was ready in time for his daily three o'clock press conference. He handed out the sheets and waited.

Times said, "Could we have the names of the successful revivifications?"

"Flatly impossible. This is to protect them, naturally. They still aren't in perfect health."

"When was the first successful reanimation?" asked Associated Press.

Harker glanced at Raymond, who said, "Exactly ten months ago. To be exact, it was at 3:30 in the afternoon on Tuesday, July 17 of last year. Dr. Vogel operated."

"What was the name of the patient?" United Press shot out quickly.

Harker laughed. "Good try, but no score. Patients' names will not be revealed."

"How many unsuccessful attempts were there before the July 17 success?" *Times* wanted to know.

"I don't have the exact figure," Harker said, because Raymond had neglected to give it to him. "Mart, what would you say? About—"

He hesitated. Raymond caught the hint and said, "I'd estimate approximately thirty attempts over a period of two years."

"And there have been seventy-one tries since then?" Transcontinental TV said.

"Right. With sixty-seven reanimations."

"All completely successful?" the sharp *Times* man said.

Harker looked vague. "Varying degrees of success," he replied ambiguously.

"Would you care to elaborate on that, Mr. Harker?"

"Not just now."

Video cameras recorded his statement. He was used to the televised press-conference, from

long experience in public office, and he maintained a perfectly guileless expression while uttering the evasion.

The Scripps - Howard - Cauldwell man said, "As you know, Senator Thurman is pressing for a detailed Senate investigation of your laboratory. Would you welcome such an investigation?"

"If it's conducted fairly and without prejudice," Harker said, "of course we'd welcome it. We're not trying to fool anyone. We've discovered something wonderful and we want the people of the world to share in it."

"How do you feel about the American - Conservative party stand on reanimation?" *Times* asked.

"I wasn't aware there was one."

"They issued a statement at noon today. It implies that the National-Liberal Party is going to exploit the discovery for its own personal advantage. They point to your presence as legal adviser as proof of that."

Harker smiled, but beneath the smile was sudden bitterness. So it would be political capital too? He said, "This comes as a big surprise to me. I don't have any formal affiliation with the National-Liberals, though of course I generally support their program. I'm not even a member of the national committee. And we've received no encouragement or anything else from them."

"But you were a former Nat-Lib governor, Mr. Harker. Doesn't that make you a major figure in the party hierarchy?" Scripps-Howard-Cauldwell asked.

It was a loaded question. Harker mopped the sweat from his forehead, glared straight into the eye of the video camera, and said, "I still vote Nat-Lib, if that's what you mean. But ex-governors are just ex-governors, period."

"How about the claim of Cal Mitchison and David Klaus that there have been unethical practices in this lab?" Transcontinental TV asked slyly.

Harker said, "I hardly think that's worth talking about. Mitchison and Klaus are former employees who didn't perform competently and who were discharged. It's as simple as that."

"You were the lawyer for the late Richard Bryant," said the *Times* man. "Did you make any attempts to have Mr. Bryant resuscitated?"

"I did not. The family issued a statement expressing no desire to have Mr. Bryant revivified, and at no time did anyone here suggest that he should be. The movement to revive Richard Bryant was strictly unofficial."

Harker was starting to weary under the barrage of questions. He looked at his watch; the half-hour he allotted to these confer-

ences had elapsed. He felt as if he were wrung dry.

"I'll have to ask you to cut it short now," he said. "Unless there are any other very urgent questions, we'll stop here."

Times said, "One question, Mr. Harker. Have any reanimations taken place since the announcement of the process yesterday morning?"

Harker shook his head. "The answer is no. Until the legal status of reanimation is settled, we're not proceeding with further experiments on human beings" —he regretted the unfortunate word *experiments* as soon as it passed his lips, but by then it was too late—"although we're continuing with other phases of our research. We've been bombarded with requests for reanimations, but we don't intend to attempt any. Obviously a legal decision on the validity of our process is needed first. The death-certificate laws, for instance; they'll have to be considered. And a host of other things. Well, gentlemen, I think our time is just about up."

The fearsome blaze of the video cameras died away, and the newsmen packed up their pocket recorders and left. Harker sank down wearily behind the desk and looked at Mart Raymond.

The scientist smiled admiringly. "Jim, I don't know how you do it. Stand up to those eagles, I mean. The pressure doesn't let up for a second."

"I'm used to it," Harker said with forced casualness. His stomach felt knotted, tight; his throat was dry and seemed to be covered with hundreds of small blisters. His legs, under the desk, quivered of their own volition.

Gradually, as the minutes passed, he recovered his poise. The press conference had been a sort of purgative; he had put forth all the thoughts that had been boiling within him during the day.

The battle, he saw now, would be fought on a number of fronts —but the essential standpoint was a politico-legal one. They *had* to secure Congressional approval for the process. And they had to win friends and influence people in a hurry, before the various splintered opponents of reanimation, the Beller Labs, and James Harker could join forces and provide a united front.

What would happen if reanimation lost? No doubt the technique would survive, no matter what the legal verdict was. But it would become an undercover, furtive activity, as abortion had been before the permissive laws of the late twentieth century. And *undercover* meant *dangerous; illegal* equated with *deadly*. The tools of medicine are always deadly in unskilled hands.

No doubt about it, the fight was on. It was, thought Harker, the old, old struggle—the battle

to give humanity something it craved, despite the obstacles provided by fear, greed, and ignorance. The essential fact—that of the conquest of death—could easily be clouded over by half-truths, distortions, and the well-meant fanaticism of self-righteous pressure groups.

I fought this fight once before, Harker thought. *And I let myself be beaten. But this time I'm not giving up. There's too much at stake.*

CHAPTER XI

THE NEXT morning—Wednesday—Harker found a neatly typed note sitting on his desk when he reached his office in Dormitory A. It was from Raymond. It said simply, *We got a call from Washington at 0800. Investigating committee headed by Thurman is on its way north to snoop around the lab. They're arriving noon today.*

Methodically Harker destroyed the note and turned his attention to the morning papers. He felt tense, but not unduly so; the Senatorial investigation could be the beginning of success in their campaign, and in any event it would put an end to these days of doubt. He would know at least how the reanimation project stood in the eyes of the Senate.

On this, the third morning of the Era of Reanimation, almost the entire front page of every paper was given over to a discussion of the subject. His press conference had been given a great deal of space, and as usual the *Times* had printed the full text. He read the other articles with a queasy sense of expanding confusion.

Manhattan—The late Richard Bryant was cremated here today despite a demonstration urging his reanimation. At least fifty banner-waving demonstrators attempted to interfere with the ceremony, but police maintained order.

"We are sure Father would never have approved of such an awakening," declared Jonathan Bryant, 42, oldest son of the space hero—

Montreal (UP)—A mob destroyed the home and office of Dr. Joseph Pronovost this afternoon after he refused to resuscitate a 9-year-old girl who had died the night before. Dr. Pronovost, 58, a general practitioner, claimed to have no knowledge of the Beller reanimation technique announced Monday. Despite his statement, relatives of Nancy St. Leger, a victim of leukemia, broke into the doctor's home and attacked him.

Dr. Pronovost was reported to be in good condition at Sacred Heart Hospital—

Corpus Christi, Tex. (AP)—Four men and two women suffered injuries here this evening as a result of a rumor that a Beller reanimation was taking place at a local funeral home.

More than thirty persons entered the Burr Funeral Parlors in an attempt to prevent the reanimation. A funeral service was in progress, and the injuries resulted when guests turned back the intruders. The funeral continued as scheduled after the disturbance.

There were other similar stories elsewhere in the newspapers: violence on both sides of the controversy, angry and ill-informed people trying to prevent or to bring about reanimations. Harker gloomily put the papers aside.

Dark forces were being unleashed. He suspected there was violence yet to come. The fabric of society had been unbound; anything might happen now.

At twenty minutes to twelve, Benedict Lurie stuck his head through Harker's door and said, "A helicopter full of senators just landed outside. Raymond's talking to them right now."

"How many?"

Lurie shrugged. "There were ten in the copter. I couldn't tell you how many are senators."

"I'll be right out," Harker said.

He filed away the newspapers, cleaned his desk, and self-consciously straightened his clothing before he went outside. A little group stood in the clearing formed by the area between the three main buildings. Harker saw Matt Raymond, Vogel, Barchet, and Dr. Smathers, and they were talking to—among others—Senator Clyde Thurman.

Harker joined them. Thurman was the first to notice him; he stared at Harker glintingly and rumbled, "Ah—Harker. Hello, there."

"How are you, Senator?"

"Never better. Harker, you know these men? Senators Brewster of Iowa, Vorys of South Carolina, Dixon of Wyoming, Westmore of California. Gentlemen, you know Mr. Harker—former Governor of New York, of course."

Harker shook hands all around. He knew most of the senators at least casually; Dixon and Westmore represented the Far West branch of the Nat-Libs, while Brewster and Vorys were arch-Conservatives.

Thurman was the chairman of the committee, and would have the deciding vote in case of a tie. Harker felt apprehensive of that. The venerable Senator was ostensibly a Nat-Lib; at least he was elected every six years under that label. But in the past decade he had been trending increasing-

ly toward conservative ways of thinking, and away from the party he had helped to found forty years earlier; in the great political upheaval and reshuffling of the 1990's.

Each of the senators was accompanied by a staff assistant. That made ten in all.

Thurman said, "The hearings will begin next week, Mr. Harker. We're here for a preliminary look-see, you understand."

"Of course." Harker glanced at Raymond and said, "Mart, have you been introduced?"

Raymond nodded.

Harker went on, "Mr. Raymond is the director of the labs. He'll conduct you wherever you would like to go, on the premises."

Raymond looked worried; Harker had seen the faint harried expression growing on the dapper lab director's face in the past few days. It troubled Harker. Raymond was a good organizer, a level-headed scientist—but he was showing alarming signs of crumbling under the sudden pressure brought about by Mitchison's treasonous press release.

Harker edged close to him and murmured, "What's on the schedule for the senators?"

Through tight lips Raymond replied, "The main event's a cadaver."

"You're going to risk it?"

Raymond shrugged. Worry-lines tightened his cheeks. "We'll have to do it sooner or later. Why not now?"

Harker made no reply. Attempting a human reanimation in front of the senators was a long-shot gamble, even with odds of five to one in favor of success.

If the experiment succeeded, they had gained very little; if it failed, they had lost everything right at the start. The odds of five to one were highly deceptive. But Harker decided to go along with Raymond, just this one time.

He said, "Shall we begin our tour, gentlemen?"

RAYMOND had evidently been working frantically all morning to set things up. The labs were spotlessly clean, everything well-ordered and well-dusted. The researchers had received their instructions, too; every one of them looked Constructively Busy, doing something scientific-looking no matter how trivial. In reality, most of them spent a good half their time staring into space, making doodles on scrap paper, or thumbing through textbooks —but senators could never be expected to believe that such idle acts were part of genuine scientific research.

The tour began with a rapid and exhausting general survey of the labs; Raymond served as

guide, giving forth bristling scientific terminology at every possible opportunity. The senators looked impressed.

The senators also looked increasingly weary — all except Thurman, who strode along next to Raymond and Harker and put forth a never-ending string of questions, some of them pointless and others embarrassingly perceptive.

As he struggled to keep pace with Thurman, Harker felt a surge of new admiration for the Nat-Lib patriarch. Thurman was a ruggedly built man, well over six feet tall and still erect of bearing; his face was a craggy affair dominated by massive snowy-white eyebrows and a thatch of silver hair, and his voice was a commanding rumble.

It was Thurman who had completed the destruction of the old Democratic and Republican parties by serving as organizer for the National-Liberal Party that carried the 1990 congressional elections; he had then persuaded the incumbent President Morrison to run for re-election on the Nat-Lib, rather than Democratic ticket, in '92—and, by '94, the obsolete political parties had vanished, replaced by a more logical alignment of liberal against conservative.

Now, Harker thought, the party lines were blurring again; perhaps it was an inevitable force at work. There were liberals in the American-Conservatives, and some early Nat-Libs, especially Thurman, were with increasing regularity voting for Conservative-sponsored measures. Perhaps in another fifty years' time a further re-organization would be needed; it seemed to be necessary about once a century, judging by past performance.

As they explored the enzyme lab and watched the big centrifuge at work in the serotinin room, Harker wondered how he stood with Thurman now. Fifteen years ago, he had virtually been a son to the Senator, serving for a while as his private secretary before being tapped for prominence in the New York Nat-Lib organization. Thurman had guided him up through the Mayoralty, saw him into the governor's mansion in Albany—and then, when the party decided to ostracize him, Thurman had not said a word in his defense. It was more than a year since he had spoken to the veteran legislator.

"These dogs," Senator Vorys said as Raymond and Vogel demonstrated reanimation on a pair of spaniels, "they feel no pain?" Vorys was a waspish, bald little man, with seemingly a lifetime tenure as American-Conservative Senator from South Carolina.

"Absolutely none," Raymond assured him.

"Animal experiments are le-

gal," remarked Senator Westmore, the Californian Nat-Lib. "No grounds for objecting there."

"I wasn't objecting," snapped Vorys. "Merely inquiring."

Harker smiled to himself.

The dogs were cleared away in due time; Harker saw the tension-lines reassert themselves on Raymond's face, and he knew the main event was about to begin.

When Raymond spoke, his voice was thin and strained. "Gentlemen, I know you've come here for one main purpose —to see if human life can be restored. The time has come for us to demonstrate our technique."

Raymond licked his lips. Tension mounted in the lab room. The senators stirred in anticipation; the five staff men scribbled notes furiously. Harker felt dry fingers clutching at his windpipe. It was a sensation he remembered having felt on two election nights, at that moment just after the polls had closed—when, with the die irretrievably cast, there was nothing to do but wait until the electronic counters had done their job and announced the winner.

He waited now. Two white-smocked assistants rolled in an operating-table on which a covered cadaver lay.

In a harsh, edgy voice Raymond said, "We secure most of our experimental cadavers from local hospitals. We have permits for this. The body here is approximately the one hundredth we have used in our work, and the seventy-second since the first successful reanimation."

The covers were peeled back. Harker flinched slightly; the body was that of a boy of about twelve or thirteen, and it was not a pretty sight.

"This boy drowned late yesterday afternoon in a nearby lake," Raymond said hoarsely. "All conventional methods of resuscitation were tried without success."

"You mean artificial respiration, heart massage, and things like that?" Senator Dixon said.

"Yes. The boy was worked over for nearly eight hours, and pronounced dead early this morning. When I phoned the hospital to arrange for a demonstration specimen for you gentlemen, I was allowed to speak to the boy's father, who gave permission for this experiment."

Five minirecorders on five secretarial wrists drank in Raymond's words. Harker felt growing anxiety; still, he had to admit that using a boy for the experiment was a good touch—if the experiment worked.

He was not afraid of total failure; that could always be explained away and accepted tolerantly.

It was the one-out-of-six chance that frightened him, the worse-than-failure of restoring the boy's body and not his mind.

Raymond nodded to Vogel, who again was presiding over the reanimation. The bearded surgeon clamped the electrodes to the boy's temples and wrists, and lowered the great hooded bulk of the reanimator.

"The initial attack will come simultaneously through the electrodes and through hormone injections," Raymond said dreamingly. "Heart massage will follow, as well as artificial operation of the lungs. Keep your eyes on these instruments; they measure heartbeat, respiration, and the electrical activity of the brain."

The room was terribly silent. Vogel moved swiftly and smoothly, confidently, without tension. He threw three switches. The archaic light-bulbs overhead dimmed slightly at the instant of power-drain.

Driblets of sweat rolled down Harker's face. The five senators watched eagerly; he wondered what they were thinking now, how they were reacting as electrical currents rippled through a dead brain and hormones raced through a stilled bloodstream.

The boy was dwarfed by the hovering instrument that simultaneously clung to his exposed heart, pumped his lungs, jolted his brain, fed awakening substances to his blood. The needles on the indicator gauges began to flicker gently.

Harker felt little of the earlier revulsion this sight had caused in him. Now he stared at the slim thin-limbed body of the boy, his skin mottled with the blue imprint of asphyxiation, and waited for the miracle to take place.

Minutes passed. Once Thurman coughed and it was like a physical blow. Needles rose on dials, wavered, fell back as Vogel decreased power, stepped forward again as the delicate fingers nudged the rheostat a few fractions of an inch upward.

"Watch the EEG indicator," Vogel murmured.

The needle was tracing out an increasingly more agitated line. The calmness of sleep was ending.

"Respiration approaching normal. I'm shutting off the lung manipulators."

The heart-pump followed. Frowning, Vogel moistened his lips and yanked down on toggle-switches, finally drawing the main rheostat back to point zero.

"Artificial controls are withdrawn," Vogel said. "The life process continues."

The boy lived. Raymond said quietly to Harker, "The EEG patterns are normal ones. The boy's mind is okay. We did it."

We did it. Harker felt a sharp

sense of triumph, as if he personally had accomplished something. The senators would *have* to react favorably to something like this, he thought.

He glanced at Thurman. The old man was gray-faced, disturbed. Harker said, quietly, "Well, Senator? You've just seen a miracle."

He wasn't prepared for the reply, when it came. Thurman shook his great head slowly from side to side like a dying bison and said, "Jim, this is nightmarish. In the name of all that's good, boy, why did you get mixed up in it?"

CHAPTER XII

TWO HOURS later, the Senate committee had gone, but the gloom of their presence still hovered darkly over Harker.

A delayed reaction having nothing to do with the visit of the senators had struck him. The old wounds of that day at the beach were open once again; once again he huddled Eva's cold little form against his.

Somewhere else on the laboratory grounds, surgeons were working over a twelve-year-old boy, stitching together the surgical apertures that had been made to permit resuscitation. By tomorrow, the boy would be out of anesthesia. In a few weeks, he would be walking around, healthy, recalled to life after twenty hours of death.

Eva had drowned. She had not been saved.

"I don't understand it," Mart Raymond exclaimed vehemently. "It just doesn't make sense."

Drawn for a moment from his painful memories, Harker said, "What doesn't make sense?"

"Thurman. How can he stand there and watch a dead boy come to life, and end up twice as solid against us as he was before?"

Harker shrugged. "I wish I knew. I thought we won them over with that show—until Thurman spoke up. The old fossil is fogged up with age, I guess. He's got some preconceived idea that it's immoral to bring back the dead, and having it done right in front of him just solidified it."

The strain was showing on Raymond, Harker saw. His gray eyes were red-rimmed and bleary; his face had grown thin. He had given up a career in medical research to handle the job of running Beller Labs—and perhaps he was regretting that, now.

He said, "Thurman is supposed to be a Nat-Lib. I could understand those two Conservatives turning up their noses, but I thought—"

"Yeah. So did I. But Thurman's an old man."

"The Conservatives came out against reanimation today, didn't

they? Doesn't he realize he's helping the opposition if he fights us?"

"Maybe he doesn't think of them as opposition any more," Harker said. "He's eighty-eight years old. He may *look* alert and bright-eyed, but that's no guarantee against senility."

"If he votes against us," Raymond said, "we're cooked. How can we win him over?"

"The hearings begin next Monday. We've got four days to figure out a line of attack. Maybe the old buzzard will die before Monday." Harker reddened slightly as he spoke the words; the thought of a universe without Clyde Thurman in it was a mind-shaking concept for him.

He looked at his watch. Five minutes to three. Right on the button, Lurie stuck his head in and said, "Time for the press conference, Jim."

Leadenly Harker nodded. "Okay. Send them in, Lurie."

HE RAN THROUGH what he had to say in less than half an hour. He told them that the senatorial committee had been there and had watched the successful reanimation of a twelve-year-old boy. He expressed a hope that the demonstration had impressed the senators favorably, and did not mention that Thurman's remarks implied a negative reaction.

There was a brief session of sporadic questions; then Harker pleaded exhaustion and hustled the newsmen out. He felt tremendously weary, but at the same time there was the excitement of knowing he was in a fight, and a tough fight.

He phoned Lois and said he would be home in time for dinner. She was being cooperative beyond the call of wifely duty, he thought. He was hardly ever home these days, and when he did show up at Larchmont he was a pale, exhausted ghost of himself, with little energy left over for family life.

The evening papers came in about half past four. Harker had been preparing a plan of attack for the Senate hearings the next week; he looked up when Lurie silently dropped the stack on his desk.

There was a statement from Mitchison and Klaus in most of the papers, to the effect that the Beller Laboratories were in the hands of—approximately—power-hungry madmen, and that they should be stripped of control immediately.

"I wonder what they hope to gain by that?" Raymond asked. "Even if they *do* succeed in getting control of the labs, they'll have thoroughly loused up the whole idea of reanimation."

Harker nodded. "We'll shut them up soon enough. I spoke to

Gerhardt this morning and he said the hearing's coming up soon."

"How about this other thing you're involved with? The Bryant case. When's the hearing on that?"

"Tomorrow," Harker said. "I'll be tied up with that all day, I guess. But then I'll be free to devote full time here."

He skimmed through some of the other papers. More news of mob disturbance; this business of mobbing physicians because they either allegedly had been practicing reanimation or had refused to reanimate some newly-dead person was becoming disturbingly more frequent. There were three instances of it in the late editions — in Idaho, Missouri, and Louisiana. The mobs acted with fine impartiality, rioting on both sides of the question. Harker brooded for a while over that.

The editorial pages universally hailed the decision of the Senate to hold an immediate investigation; the papers seemed divided here too, the Conservative ones urging suppression of reanimation and the Nat-Lib papers pleading for sane consideration and government control.

By now everyone was getting into the act: philosophers, painters, athletes, ministers of foreign countries, were all quoted copiously pro and con reanimation. The Russians at last were heard from: Georgi Aksakov, President-General of the Federated Socialist States, sent a note of congratulations to President McComber on the American conquest of death, and extended hope that America would follow the time-honored custom of sharing its scientific developments with the other nations of the world.

By now word had reached the settlements on the Moon and under the Mars Dome, too; by wire came messages of enthusiasm from the two international colonies. It was only to be expected, Harker thought, that the space colonists would welcome the breakthrough with joy. There was no breeding-ground for hysterical anti-scientific reaction on an airless world where only scientific miracles daily insured survival.

It was fast becoming a contest between darkness and light, between education and ignorance—a contest complicated by the presence of educated, intelligent, utterly sincere fanatics in the camp of the opposition.

"We must have regard for the soul," declared the spokesman for the Archbishop of Canterbury. "A limitation has been placed on the term of man's life. We must proceed with care when we destroy a limitation of God."

It was, Harker had to admit, a reasonable attitude—granted a

framework of beliefs which he and much of the rest of the world did not share.

"The United States has always been the world pioneer," declared Senator Marshall of Alabama, the elder statesman of the American - Conservatives. "We never show fear as we approach the boundary between the known and the unknown. But we must exert caution in this new step, and take care lest we move recklessly forward and unleash forces which can destroy the bonds of society."

The medical societies had statements, too — sound ones. "The problem," declared an A.M.A. spokesman, "is essentially a soul-searing one. If the Beller process is valid, every physician will have the power to return life to the dead. Shall he make use of this power whenever he can? Or will there be the danger of giving life indiscriminately, to those perhaps who do not merit a reprieve? What will happen if a dead man's family refuses the right of reanimation? Can the physician proceed? And is he guilty of murder if he does not? Who will make the decisions? An entirely new code of medical ethics must be developed before any wide-scale practice of reanimation can be permitted."

These were sound viewpoints, and Harker had no issue with them. But there were other, more hysterical voices clamoring in the newspapers, and hundreds of vituperous letters had already descended on the Litchfield post office as well.

People who feared death feared reanimation more. There were those who assumed that reanimation might become the property of an aristocracy that would perpetuate itself over and over, while leaving the common people to death. There were those who dreaded the return to life of a loved one, who were unwilling to face again someone who had been "beyond" and returned.

Fear and ignorance, ignorance and fear. Harker read the letters in the newspapers, and his head swam. The ones received direct were even worse.

. . . you are violating the command of God brought on us by Adam's fall, Harker. But you will rot in Hell for it . . .

. . . you Harker and Raymond and the others there should have been strangled in your cribs. Bringing the dead back from the grave is disgusting. You will fill the world with a race of undead zombies . . .

. . . I know what it is to have a loved one die, do you? (Yes, Harker thought.) *But I would not want to touch the lips of one who was dead . . .*

Harker paused a moment in thought as he read that last letter, wondering how he would feel

had Eva been brought back to him there on the beach. He had assumed that he would welcome the idea, but now he remembered Lois' doubtful answer to the question, and it seemed to him that he himself was doubtful too now. Would he be able to embrace a daughter who had died and had been reanimated? Could he—

He shook his head in bitter self-contempt. *I'm overtired,* he thought. *All this superstitious muck is contagious. The life process stops, it starts again—and is anything lost? Wake up, Harker. Of course you'd have hugged Eva if she had been brought back to life.*

It had been a long day. He riffled through a few more letters, but the emotional impact was too great for him to bear after all the other conflicting events of the day. It was not easy to read letters from people who had pleaded for the reanimation of a loved one on Monday, and who now wrote bitterly to say that the period of grace had passed, and by their silence the reanimators had become murderers.

. . . my fiancee Joan who was seventeen and electrocuted in a kitchen accident Sunday night could have been saved if you had been willing. But three days have gone by and now she is forever gone . . .

Even more hellish than watching the slow ebb of life from a dying person, Harker thought, must be the wait while the hours pass after death, and the time for reanimation passes with them. New torments had been loosed upon the world, he saw. He felt like a man riding a tiger that grew larger with each day.

He picked up another one:

. . . you may remember I mentioned my wife, mother of our four children who was close to death from cancer. Well she died the night I wrote to you, and not having heard from you yet I suppose you cannot help me in this matter. I understand revival must be done on day of death, since she has now been gone two days I am arranging for her burial. Though I am unhappy and disappointed I do not hold bitterness in my heart against you, may God forgive you for having let Lucy die . . .

Harker remembered that one: Mikkelsen, from Minnesota. The implied accusation of murder, cloaked as it was by the prayer for God's forgiveness, chilled him. He put the letters away, phoned across the lab to Raymond, and said he was going home for the day.

"Good luck with that hearing tomorrow," Raymond said.

"Thanks."

The air was clean and warm as he stepped outside; at five in the afternoon of an almost-sum-

mer day, the sun was still bright, the sky blue and curiously transparent. Harker tried to blot away the network of human suffering whose vortex he had apparently become; he drew in a deep breath, expanded his chest, swung his arms loosely at his sides.

A yellow dart crossed the sky and was gone; after it came the abrupt *blurp* of sound. It was a southbound rocket to Florida. No doubt it would be landing in Miami before he had reached his own home.

He remembered the legal fight when rocket service had been instituted on a commercial basis, almost thirty years ago. The jetlines had fought tooth and nail against introduction of rocket service; yet, today, both jets and rockets served the cause of transportation amicably enough.

There had been the Moon wrangle too, back in the trouble-wracked twentieth century. He had cut his legal teeth on the suits and countersuits; they were standard fare in every law-school. The Moon had been reached almost simultaneously by America and Russia in the early 1960's, during a period of international conflict and danger. The Socialist revolution in Russia in 1971 had ended the threat of atomic war, but even so it had not been until 1997 that the United States agreed to join forces with the Federated Socialist States in making the Moon base truly international in character.

There, too, forces of reaction had fought the merger on grounds that seemed to them just and necessary. They had been defeated, ultimately—and now, the Moon base and its newer companion on Mars were hailed as triumphs of the harmony of mankind.

Now reanimation. The old struggle was joined again. Harker told himself that the force of history was on his side, that ultimate victory would be his. But what sacrifices would be made, what campaigns fiercely fought, before then?

He reached his home at six-fifteen. Lois had the video set on, and even as he stood in the doorway the words of a newscaster drifted toward him:

"Senator Thurman of New York and four colleagues today visited the Beller Laboratories and witnessed an actual human reanimation which was successful. Senator Thurman later commented, and I quote, There is no doubt that a restoration of life took place. What is in doubt is whether this power is one that mankind should permit to be used, end quote. Senator Thurman will head a committee to study the implications of reanimation. Hearings begin Monday in Washington. . . ."

Thurman was chairman, and Thurman had already indicated opposition. It was not a good omen. Harker kissed his wife wearily and said to Chris, "Get me something strong to drink, lad. I've had a tough day."

CHAPTER XIII

THE HEADLINE the next morning, black against the faint green of the paper, was, THURMAN TO OPPOSE LEGALIZED REANIMATION. Harker read the story at breakfast; it seemed the veteran senator had had a chance to think things over, and his conclusion was that reanimation was evil and should be suppressed.

Harker tried to pretend he had not seen it. It was a staggering setback; it negated any possible gains they might make at the hearing next week. With the vote of the tie-breaking chairman already committed to their opposition, Harker thought, what chance did they stand?

He glanced quickly over the rest of the front page. Riot in Des Moines; accusation of reanimation leads to attack on doctor in Missouri. And—Harker nearly choked on his breakfast coffee—what was this?

RETURN TO LIFE A FAILURE, PATIENT SUICIDES

New York—Police are searching the Hudson River this morning for the body of 58-year-old Wayne Janson, who allegedly jumped to his death from the lower level of the George Washington Bridge late last night.

"Wayne was in a state of despondency since submitting to the Beller reanimation technique two months ago," said Jonathan Bryant, of 312 W. 79th St., a close friend of the dead man. "He suffered a stroke in February and placed himself in the hands of the Beller people. I was notified of his death and reanimation early in March, but when he returned to Manhattan he seemed to be entirely changed. His whole personality had changed. He—

"Excuse me," Harker muttered to his wife. Clutching the paper, he ran to the phone and tapped out Mart Raymond's number.

"Mart? Jim. Have you seen this Wayne Janson thing in the paper?"

"What's that?"

Harker rapidly read the article. Raymond was silent for a moment, then said, "Huh? Who does he think he's kidding?"

"What do you mean?"

"We've never had anyone of that name here. Bryant's obviously fabricating something."

"I figured that when I saw his name in the article. You better check the records, though. We've got grounds for a suit if you're right."

"Jim, I tell you we've never carried out any reanimations on anyone named Wayne Janson. Bryant is obviously trying to smear us."

"Smear me," Harker corrected. "But I guess it amounts to the same thing."

"What are you going to do?"

"Nothing yet," Harker said. "I'll wait until the police find the body and then demand proof from Bryant."

"But there *is* no body, Jim! It's just a hoax!"

Grimly Harker said, "It may be a hoax, but I'm willing to bet there's a body. Jonathan isn't *that* foolish!"

THE LONG-DELAYED Richard Bryant will hearing took place at last at half-past-ten that morning, in the gray-walled, luminolit chambers of District Judge T. H. Auerbach. The affair was almost a farce; it lasted no more than twenty minutes.

Jonathan Bryant was not there. His sister Helen was the official representative of the Bryant children, and she explained curtly that Jonathan was "overcome with grief at the death of a very dear friend last night" and would not attend.

Six other Bryants were in court, all of them hungry for the old man's millions. They had retained a lawyer named Martinson who briefly and concisely explained that the old man had not been in sound mind at the time of making the will, and that it was therefore invalid.

It was a flimsy stand, and Harker said so. He spoke for no more than ten minutes. Judge Auerbach smiled politely, said he had studied the briefs from both sides with care, and ruled in favor of upholding the will.

Just as simple as that. Helen Bryant tossed Harker a glance of molten hatred and flounced out, followed by her younger brothers and sisters. Auerbach leaned forward from his bench and said to Harker, "I'm glad *that's* over with. One more delaying injunction—"

"There wouldn't have been one, Tom. They just were waiting for old Bryant to kick off. Jonathan didn't want to give him the satisfaction of winning while he was alive."

Auerbach shrugged. "They really didn't have a claim to the money. Were they just trying to make trouble?"

Harker nodded. "Trouble's their specialty, Tom."

"Well, you're through with having trouble with the Bryants now, I guess."

Harker shook his head slowly. "No," he said. "Not by a long shot."

HE RODE uptown from the courthouse and stopped off at his

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law office for the first time in a week. The girls in the outer office stared at him strangely, as if he had undergone some frightening apotheosis and was no longer just the firm's newest partner.

He crossed left and rapped on Bill Kelly's door. The plump lawyer smiled at him as he entered, but without much warmth.

"Morning, Jim. Long time no see."

"I've been busy."

"I know. I know all about it."

Harker ignored Kelly's tone and said, "I've just come from the Bryant hearing. Thought I'd let you know that it's over. Poof: fifteen minutes!"

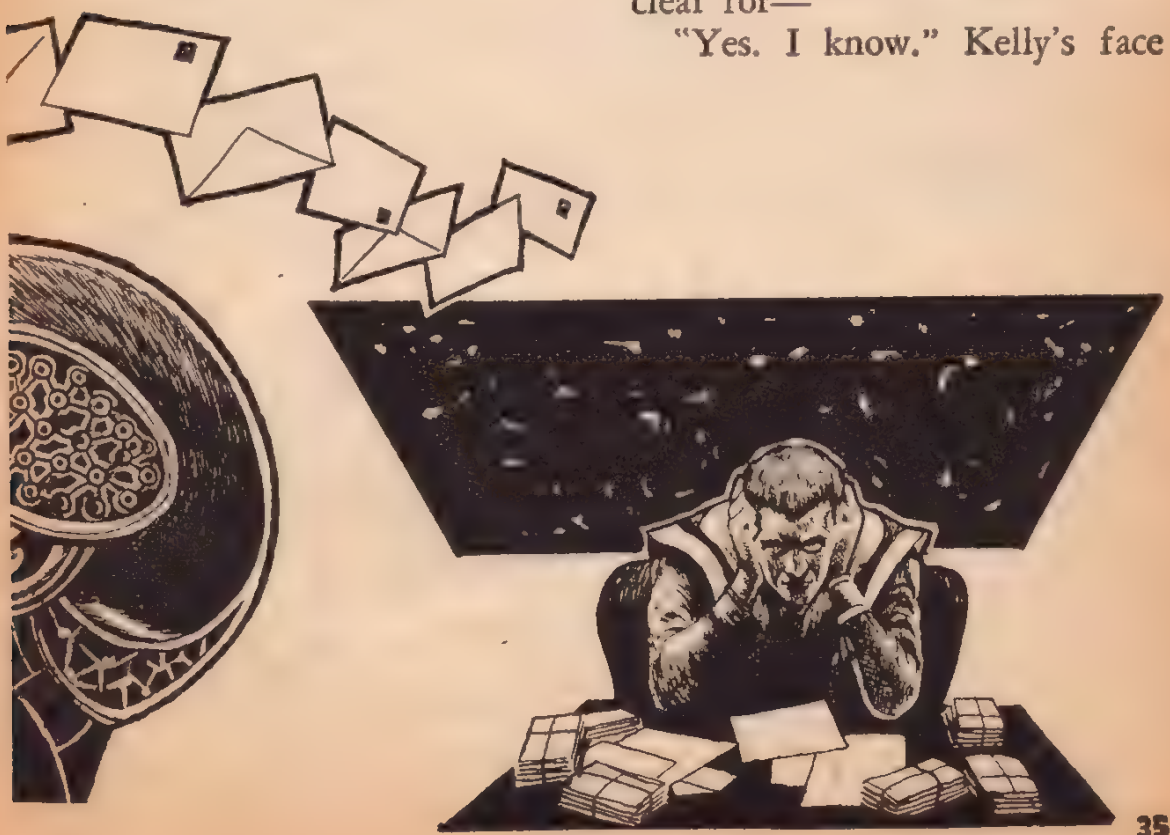
"The will was upheld?"

"What else? It was just a case of willful petty obstruction on the part of the Bryant family. They're mean, twisted people, Bill. They've lived all their lives in the shadow of one great man —Rick Bryant—and I guess they chose this time to show him and everyone else just what Great Big Important Persons they really were." He scowled.

There was a pained expression on Kelly's face that seemed to have nothing to do with the Bryant affair. Slowly Kelly said, "Jim, this completes all the current work you're doing here, isn't that right?"

Harker nodded. "I turned over the Fuller and Heidell cases to Portobello. That was to leave me clear for—"

"Yes. I know." Kelly's face



reddened even more than normally, and he squirmed wretchedly in his inflated pneumatic desk-chair. "I've been following the papers, Jim. I've been following the whole thing."

"I warned you it was hot."

"I know. I didn't know how hot it was, though. Jim, this hurts me," Kelly said. "I'm going to ask a favor of you. It's a lousy thing to ask, because it shows I don't have guts or the courage of your convictions or something along those lines. But—"

Harker said, "I'll spare you the trouble of putting it into words. The answer is yes. If you think my presence on your firm letterhead will hurt the firm, Bill, I'll resign."

A look of gratitude appeared on Kelly's fleshy sweat-shiny face. "Jim, I want you to understand—that is—look here, I asked you to come in with me when your party booted you out, and don't think I didn't get my wrist slapped for it. But this reanimation thing is too big. I don't want to get associated with it in any way. And so—well it seemed to Portobello and Klein and me—"

"Sure, Bill." Harker had a sudden dizzying vision of himself standing at the rim of a bottomless abyss, but he heard his voice saying, calmly, rock-steady, "I'll draft a note informing you that I'm resigning because of the pressure of outside activities."

Hoarsely Kelly said, "Thanks, Jim. And if this thing blows over—if it all works out—we'll have a spot for you here. Don't forget that."

"I won't." *Not even because you don't mean it,* Harker thought. It wasn't possible for Kelly to mean it. It was just a formal ritualistic statement, this implication that he could come back at a future time.

He was through here. Probably he was through with private law practice forever. Kelly was a brave and intelligent man, but Kelly had been afraid to keep the hot potato named James Harker on his letterhead any longer. No one else would welcome him either. Beller Labs was the straw to which he had to cling now.

He stood up.

"Okay, Bill. Glad we got everything cleared up. Just thought I'd tell you about the wrap-up on the Bryant case. I'll clear out my office next week."

"No hurry about it. Oh—nearly forgot." Kelly consulted a memo slip. "Leo Winstead's office phoned here for you earlier today. The Governor wants you to call him back between one-thirty and three o'clock this afternoon."

Harker frowned momentarily. *Winstead? What does he want with me?* He said to Kelly, "Thanks, Bill. And so long."

HE BOUGHT a noontime edition of the *Star-Post* and ate a gloomy little meal by himself in a nineteenth-floor automated restaurant overlooking the East River. He pushed the meal-selector buttons almost at random; the result was largely an assortment of cheap synthetics, but he hardly cared. He ate abstractedly, not looking at his food but at the increasingly more troubling news in the paper.

There was a new statement from Senator Thurman, more doggedly anti-reanimation than the last. Apparently Thurman's views on the subject mounted in vitriol-content in hourly increments; now he said that "reanimation is of dubious value in mitigating human sorrow — a crude and unsatisfactory process that robs life of dignity." Evidently he had read about the Janson suicide. And speaking of that—

Yes. The body had been found and identified, according to a story at the bottom of page one. Wayne Janson, 58, an unmarried industrialist. Listed as suicide; Jonathan Bryant identified body. Investigation now proceeding as a result of Bryant's statement that Janson had recently undergone reanimation.

And a statement from David Klaus, too, evidently released by Mitchison: "The Janson case proves that the Beller technique can be a dangerous and destructive instrument in the wrong hands." He recognized Mitchison's blunt word-sense, the equating of *technique* and *instrument*.

At half past one he made his way to a public phonebooth, sealed himself in, snapped on the privacy-shield, and called the operator.

"I'd like to make a charge-account call to Albany."

She took his name and home phone, assured him that the call would be billed to his account, and put him through to the Governor's mansion. A relay of secretaries passed him along to Winstead.

The booth's screen was small, a seven-incher, and definition was poor. Even with that handicap, though, Harker could see the rings around Winstead's eyes. New York's Governor obviously had had little sleep the night before.

"I got your message, Leo. What goes?"

Winstead said, "You know about Thurman and his stand on reanimation, don't you?"

"Of course. Thurman visited the lab yesterday."

"And then proceeded to issue a series of statements blasting your project," Winstead said. The Governor looked like a man about to explode from conflicting tensions. In a tight-strung voice he said, "Jim, we held a caucus on

the Thurman situation last night. First let me tell you that the Nat-Libs have decided to issue a public statement praising your outfit and asking for careful consideration of reanimation."

Harker smiled. "It's about time someone said he was on our side."

"Don't break your arm patting your back," Winstead warned. "The Amer-Cons forced our hand. It took all night for us to agree to support you. A lot of us aren't in favor of reanimation at all."

"And a lot of you aren't in favor of anything I'm in favor of," Harker said crisply. "But what's this about Thurman, now?"

"He's killing us! How can we come out pro-reanimation when the elder patriarch of our party is issuing statements condemning it?"

Harker shrugged. "I'll admit you have a problem."

"Any such inconsistency would make us look silly," Winstead said. "Jim, would you do us a favor?"

The idea of doing favors for the party leaders who had summarily expelled him less than a year ago did not appeal to him. But he said, in a cautious voice, "Maybe. What do you want?"

"We haven't approached Thurman directly yet. We'd like you to do it."

"Me?"

Winstead nodded. "Go down to Washington and appeal to the old gorilla's sense of sentiment. Plead with him to come back to the fold. Thurman was once very high on you, Jim. Maybe he still is."

Harker said, "I saw Thurman yesterday and he wasn't running over with sentiment. He came, he saw, and he condemned. What more can I say to him?"

Winstead's face grew agitated. Harker wondered what pressures had been exerted on the Governor to make this phone-call. "Jim, this is for your sake as well as ours. If you can win Thurman over, Congressional approval of reanimation's a cinch! You're just cutting your own throat by refusing to go down."

"You know I'm not anxious to do favors for —"

"We understand that! But can't you see you'll be helping yourself as well? We'll try to make things easier for you if you convince Thurman."

Harker grinned pleasantly. It was fun to see Winstead squirm. "Okay," he said finally. "I'll go down to see Thurman first thing tomorrow morning."

CHAPTER XIV

FRIDAY MORNING. Ten-fifteen a.m., on the morning of May 24, 2033.

James Harker stared out the

round vitria porthole at the fleecy whiteness of the clouds over Washington. The two-hundred-fifty-mile flight from Idlewild had taken about twenty minutes by short-range jet.

Now the big passenger-ship plunged down toward the Capital's jetport. Harker felt the faint drag of gravity against his body and thought that a spaceship landing must be something like this, only tremendously more taxing. The ship quivered as its speed dwindled, dropping from 700 mph to less than half that, and halving again, while the 150-passenger ship swooped down from its flight altitude of 40,000 feet.

Harker was seeing Thurman at half-past-eleven, at the Senator's office. He rolled the phrases round in his mind once again:

"Mr. Thurman, you stuck by me long ago—"

"You owe this to your party, sir—"

"A forward step toward the bright utopia of tomorrow, Senator—"

None of the arguments sounded even remotely convincing. Thurman was a stubborn old man with a bee in his bonnet about reanimation; no amount of cajoling was going to get him to alter his stand. Still, Harker thought, he owed it to himself to try. The hearings began on Monday under Thurman's aegis. It would not hurt to have the patriarch sympathetically inclined. Nor would it be undesirable to have Leo Winstead and the whole Nat-Lib leadership beholden to him, Harker reasoned.

The yellow light flashed and a soft voice emanating from a speaker next to Harker's ear murmured, "Please fasten your safety-belts. We'll be landing in a few minutes."

Mechanically Harker guided the magnetic snaps together until he heard the proper *click!* The ship broke through the thick layer of clouds that blanketed the sky at 20,000 feet, and the white, neat, oddly sterile-looking city of Washington appeared below.

Harker hoped there would be no further difficulty over the Janson case while he was gone. Police investigators had arrived at the labs in mid-afternoon the day before, wanting to know if a reanimation had been carried out on the late industrialist. Raymond had flatly denied it, but at Harker's advice had refused to turn over the laboratory records to the police until subpoenaed to do so.

The inspectors had left, making it clear that the matter was far from at an end. Harker smiled to himself about it; any comprehensive investigation was bound to prove that the whole affair had been staged by Bryant, taking advantage of his bachelor friend's suicide declaration to smear the

reanimators in public.

But the suicide was in the newspapers, and no amount of unmasking ever really cancels out unfavorable publicity. The public would—with some justice—now link reanimation with possible mental deficiency afterward. Harker longed to have Jonathan Bryant's neck between his hands, just for a minute.

Troublemaker!

He leaned back and waited for the landing.

It took nearly half an hour for Harker to make the taxi-jaunt from the jetport to Capitol Hill, longer than the transit-time between New York and Washington. It was nearly eleven when he reached Senator Thurman's suite of offices—imposing ones, as befitted a senator who not only represented the second most populous state in the Union but who had held office for nearly seven terms.

A pink-faced, well-starched secretary about two years out of law school greeted Harker as he entered the oak-panelled antechamber.

"Sir?"

"I'm James Harker. I have an appointment with the Senator for half-past-eleven."

The secretary looked troubled. "I'm sorry, Mr. Harker. The Senator appears to be ill."

"Ill?"

"That's right, sir. He hasn't reported to his office yet today. He's always here by nine sharp, and it's almost eleven now, so we figure he must be sick."

So far as Harker knew, Clyde Thurman had not known a day's illness yet in the twenty-first century. It was strange that he should fall ill this day of days, when Harker had an appointment to see him.

But it was not like Thurman to run away from a knotty problem,either. Harker said, "Have you checked with his home?"

"No, sir." The secretary appeared to resent Harker's question. "The Senator's private life is his own."

"For all you know Thurman died this morning!"

A shrug. "We have not received word of any sort whatever."

Harker paced up and down in the antechamber for fifteen minutes, sitting intermittently, fidgeting, glancing up nervously every time the big outer door opened to admit someone. He thought back thirty-odd years, to the time when eight-year-old Jimmy Harker was reported to his school principal for some obscure, forgotten offense. He had sat in just this manner in the anteroom of the principal's office, waiting for the principal to come back from lunch to administer his punishment—his head popping around every time a clerk opened the big

door, his stomach quivering in fear that this might be the principal this time.

In time, he recalled, the principal *had* come—and had not expelled him nor phoned for his father, merely reprimanded him and sent him back to his classroom. Perhaps the same thing might happen today, he thought, perhaps some miraculous change of heart on the part of old Thurman—

But no miracles took place. Eleven-fifteen went by, and eleven-thirty, and there was no sign of Thurman. Clerks serenely went about their routine duties, ignoring the tense, sweating man in the outer office.

At ten-to-twelve Harker rose and confronted the secretary again. "Any word from Thurman?"

"Not yet, sir," was the bland reply.

Harker crooked his fingers impatiently. "Look here, why don't you phone his home? Maybe he's seriously ill."

"We never disturb the Senator at home, sir."

Harker glared at the man, exhaled exasperatedly, and growled, "I guess you won't give me his home phone number."

"Afraid not, sir."

"Is there anything you *will* do? Suppose you phone the office of Senator Fletcher for me, then."

Fletcher was the Senate Majority Leader, another veteran Nat-Lib who was likely to know where to reach Thurman if anyone was. A little to Harker's surprise, the secretary said, "You can use the phone back here. Just pick up and tell the switchboard who you want."

The phone was audio-only. A metallic voice said, *"Your party please?"* and Harker, resisting the temptation to ask for Thurman's home number (it was probably restricted) said, "Would you connect me with Senator Fletcher's office?"

Four secretaries later, Harker heard the deep, confident voice of Pennsylvania's Fletcher say, "What can I do for you, Harker? Heard you were in town."

"I'm here to see Senator Thurman," Harker said. "Do you know where—"

"Thurman? Where are you now, Harker?"

"At the Senator's office. He isn't here, and I thought you might know—"

"Me? Harker, if I knew where Thurman was I'd be talking to him and not to you. I'm looking for him myself."

Harker's hopes sank. "Have you phoned his home?"

"Yes. Nobody there has seen him since early last evening. If you get any word, Harker, call me back."

The line went dead. Harker stared at the phone thoughtfully

a moment, then replaced the receiver. He walked over to the smug secretary and said casually, "You better start looking for a new job. Senator Thurman hasn't been seen since some time last night."

"What? But—"

Interrupting the agitated reply, Harker said, "You better make some quick phone-calls. I'll be back later if the Senator turns up."

THE NEXT two hours were hectic ones in the Capitol. Harker picked up an early afternoon newspaper when he saw the huge scare-head reading WHERE IS SENATOR THURMAN? The article simply said that the 88-year-old Senator had last been seen at his huge bachelor home in nearby Alexandria shortly after dark the previous night, and that nothing had been heard of him since.

Secret Service men were combing Washington and the outlying districts. The three-thirty headlines screamed, THURMAN STILL MISSING!

No word has been received yet of the whereabouts of Senator Clyde Thurman (N-L, N.Y.), who vanished from his home early last evening. The veteran lawmaker is slated to preside over the controversial reanimation hearings beginning Monday, if—"

At four o'clock there was still no sign of the missing Senator. Harker phoned the jetport, made reservations for a four-thirty flight back to New York. At five, he was at Idlewild; he phoned Lois from there, told her what had happened, and said he was going straight out to Litchfield and would be home later, after supper.

The New York evening papers were full of the Thurman disappearance. Harker thought of phoning Winstead, then changed his mind; the Governor was well aware by now that Harker could not have kept his appointment with Thurman. Instead he rented a cab and travelled quickly out to the Beller Laboratories.

He got there shortly after six. The place was oddly empty; evidently the reporters had grown tired of clustering around the entrance to the dirt road. Three guards, fully armed, stood by the blockade in the yellow-brown light of very late afternoon.

"Hello, Mr. Harker. You can go in."

"Where's Raymond?"

"Main operating lab," the guard said.

Frowning, Harker moved past and headed across the clearing to the lab building. A late-spring breeze whistled down through the spruces, chilling him momentarily; the sun was a dying swollen reddish ball hovering near the horizon. Harker felt a strange foreboding sense of fear.

Three white-garbed medics guarded the lab entrance. Harker started to go past; one of them shook his head and said, "Very delicate work going on in there, Mr. Harker. If you're going in, be sure to keep quiet."

Harker tiptoed past.

Inside, he saw a tense group clustered around the operating table: Raymond, Vogel, Lurie, little Barchet, and a surgeon Harker did not know. There was a figure on the table. Harker could not see it.

Raymond detached himself from the group and came toward him. The lab director's face was pale, almost clammy; his lips hung slack with tension, and his eyes bulged. He looked frightened half into catatonia.

"What's going on?" Harker whispered.

"Ex-ex-pe-riment," Raymond said, shivering. "God, I wish we hadn't started this."

Raymond seemed close to collapse. Puzzled, Harker edged closer to the table, shunting Barchet to one side to get a better view. Five guilt-shadowed faces turned uneasily to stare at him.

For a long moment Harker studied the exposed face of the cadaver on the table, while billowing shockwaves clouded his mind, numbed his body. The enormity of what had been done left him almost incapable of speech for a few seconds.

Finally he looked at Raymond and said, "What have you idiots done?"

"We—we thought—"

Raymond stopped. Barchet said, "We all agreed on it after you left yesterday. We would bring him here and try—try to convince him that we were right. But he had a heart attack and d-died. So—"

In the yellow light of the unshielded incandescents the lie stood out in bold relief on Barchet's face. It was Lurie who said finally, "We might as well tell the truth. We had Thurman kidnapped and we chloroformed him. Now we're going to revive him and tell him he died of natural causes but was reanimated. We figure he'll support us if—"

Wobbly-legged, Harker groped for a lab stool and sat down heavily, cradling his suddenly pounding head in his hands. The monstrosity of what had been done behind his back stunned him. To kidnap Thurman, kill him, hope that in reviving him he would be converted to their cause—

"All right," Harker said tonelessly. "It's too late for saying no, I guess. You realize you've condemned all of us to death."

"Jim," Raymond began, "do you really think—"

"Kidnapping, murder, illegal scientific experimentation—oh, I could strangle you!" Harker felt

like bursting into tears. "Don't you see that when you revive him he's bound to throw the book at us? Why did you have to do this when I was gone?"

"We planned it a long time ago," Barchet said. "We didn't think you'd be back in time to see us doing it."

Vogel said, "Perhaps if we don't carry out the resuscitation, and merely dispose of the body—"

"No!" Harker said, half-sobbing. "We'll reanimate him. And that'll be the end of this grand crusade. Finish." He looked down on Thurman's massive head, imposing even in death. His voice was a harsh hissing thing as he said, "Go on! Get started!"

He watched, numb-brained, as if dream-fogged, while Vogel and the other surgeon prepared the complex reanimating instrument. His heart pounded steadily, booming as if it wanted to burst through his ribcage.

He felt very tired. But now, thanks to this one master blunder, all their striving was at an end. Thurman, awakened, would denounce them for what they had done. After that, they ceased to be scientists and would be mere criminals in the eyes of humanity.

Harker listened to the murmured instructions being passed back and forth over the table, watched the needles entering the flesh, the electrodes being clamped in place. Minutes passed. Vogel's thin hand grasped the controlling rheostat. Power surged into the dead man's body.

After a while Harker rose and joined the group around the table. Needles wavered and leaped high, indicating that life had returned. But—

"Look at the EEG graph," Raymond said hollowly.

The graph held no meaning for Harker. But he did not need to look there to see what had happened.

The eyes of the body on the table had opened, and were staring toward the ceiling. They were not the beady, alert, eager eyes of Senator Thurman. They were the dull, glazed, slack-muscled eyes of an idiot.

CHAPTER XV

FOR A MOMENT, no one spoke. Harker stood some five feet from the operating table, looking away from the creature under the machine, thinking, *These people are like small boys with a new shiny toy. I should never have trusted them alone. I should never have gotten involved in this.*

"What do we do now?" Lurie asked. The gangling biologist was nearing a state of hysteria. Sweat-drops beaded his forehead. "The man's mind is gone."

"Permanently?" Harker asked. "There's no way of restoring it?"

Raymond shook his head. "None. The EEG indicates permanent damage to the brain."

Harker took a deep breath. "In that case, there's nothing for us to do but kill him again and dispose of the body."

The suggestion seemed to shock them. Barchet reacted first: "But that's *murder!*"

"Exactly. And what did you think you were committing the first time you killed Thurman?" There was no answer, so he went on. "According to the present law of the land, you were all guilty of murder the moment you put the chloroform-mask over Thurman's face. The law needs fixing now, but that's irrelevant. You made yourselves subject to the death penalty when you abducted him, incidentally."

"How about you?" Barchet snapped. "You seem to be counting yourself out."

Harker resisted the impulse to lash out at the little man who had caused so much trouble. "As a matter of fact, technically I'm innocent," he said. "The kidnapping and murder both were carried out without my knowledge or consent. But there isn't a court in the world that would believe me, so I guess I'm in this boat with you. At the moment we all stand guilty of kidnapping and first-degree murder. I'm simply suggesting we get rid of the evidence and proceed as if nothing had happened. Either that or call the police right now."

Raymond said, "I think you're right." The lab director's face was green with fear; like the rest of them, he was awakening slowly to the magnitude of their act. "We did this thing because we thought we were serving our goal. We were wrong. But the only way we can *continue* to serve our goal is to commit another crime. We'll have to dispose of the body."

"That won't be hard," Vogel said. "We dispose of bodies pretty frequently around here. I'll do a routine dissection and then we'll just make sure the parts get pretty widely scattered through the usual channels."

Raymond nodded. He seemed to be growing calmer now. "Better begin at once. Chloroform him again and do the job in the autopsy lab. Make it the most comprehensive damn autopsy you ever carried out."

Silently Vogel and the other surgeon wheeled the body out, with Lurie following along behind. In the empty operating room, Harker glared at Raymond and Barchet. He felt no fear, no apprehension—merely a kind of dull hopeless pain.

"Well done," he said finally. "I wish I could tell you exactly how I feel now."

Raymond pursed his lips nervously. "I think I know. You'd

like to strangle us, wouldn't you?"

"Something like that," Harker admitted. "Why did you have to do it? *Why?*"

"We thought it would help us," said Barchet.

"Help? To kidnap and kill a United States Senator? But—oh, what's the use? Just remember now that there are six of us who know about this. The first one who cracks and talks not only sends all six of us to the gas chamber but finishes reanimation permanently."

Suddenly he did not want to be with them. He said, "I'm going to my office to get some papers, and then I'm going home. Can I trust you irresponsible lunatics for an entire weekend?"

Raymond looked boyishly at his shoes; Barchet tried to glare at Harker, but there was something sickly and unconvincing about the expression. Harker turned and headed out.

HE MADE the long journey from the lab to his home by taxi, an extravagance that he did not often permit himself. Tonight it seemed necessary. He had no heart for facing other people in a public jet, for buying tickets at a terminal, for doing anything else but sitting in the back of a cab, with the driver shrouded off by his compartment wall, sitting alone and staring out at the bright night city lights as he rode home.

Friday, May 24, 2033. Harker thought back to the morning when Lurie had first come to him. That had been a Wednesday; May 8, it had been. Two weeks and two days ago, and in that time so much had happened to him, so many unexpected things.

He had lost his affiliation with the law firm. He had re-entered public life, this time as publicity agent, legal adviser, and general champion of a weird and controversial cause. He had become a stranger to his family, a man bound up entirely in the many-levelled conflicts arising out of the simple announcement that a successful reanimation technique had been developed.

He had watched two dogs and two human beings, both of them dead, return to the ranks of the living. He had watched a third man, a great man, a former idol of his, suffer death in the name of this strange cause.

He had become a murderer and a kidnapper. Unintentionally, true, and after the fact; but his guilt was as sure as that of the man who had lowered the chloroform.

Forces ranked themselves against him: Mitchison, Klaus, Jonathan Bryant — petty little men, those three, but they could cause trouble. Barchet, who was on their side and still managed to hurt them with everything he did. The Church; the American-Con-

servative Party; the ignorant, fearful people of the world, swayed by whatever hysteria happened to be in the air at the moment.

Had it been worth it?

He thought back, putting himself in the shoes of that James Harker of 8 May 2033 who had made the decision to go ahead. The bait had been the image of Eva, drowned, beyond his grasp. Eva might have lived.

Yes, he thought, *it's worth it.*

Abruptly the gloom began to lift from him. He realized that none of the things that had happened to him mattered—not the dismissal by Kelly, nor the crimes for which he had assumed the burden, nor the inner turmoil which was exhausting him. How transient everything was!

The important fact was reanimation—the defeat of death. The end of death's dominion. That was his goal, and he would work toward it—and if he destroyed himself and those about him in the process, well, there had been martyrs in man's history before. That Evas of tomorrow might live, Harker thought, I will go ahead.

"Larchmont, mister," the driver called out. "Which way do I go?"

Harker gave him the directions. They reached his home a few minutes later; the fare was over $10, and Harker added a good tip to it.

The cab pulled away. Harker stood for a moment outside his home. The sitting-room lights were on, and one of the upstairs bedroom lights. It was shortly before ten, and since it was the weekend Chris would still be up, though young Paul had long since been tucked away.

And Lois probably sat before the video, waiting patiently for her husband to come home. Harker smiled gently, put his thumb to the identity-plate of the door, and waited for it to open.

Lois came to the door to meet him. She looked pale, tired; when she kissed him, it was purely mechanical, almost ritualistic.

"I was hoping you were in that cab, Jim. How'd everything go?"

He shrugged. "I don't know, Lois. I feel beat."

"Come on inside. Tell me about your day."

He followed her into the sitting-room. The autoknit stood to one side; she had been making socks, it seemed. The video blared some hideous popular song:

"If I could hold you in my arms,
Baby!
and cuddle up and—"

Harker jerked a thumb toward the screen. "Is this the sort of junk you've been watching?"

Lois smiled faintly. "It's a good tranquilizer. I just let the sound bellow out and numb my mind."

He thumbed the off-switch set

in the table before the couch, and the singing died away, the image shrank to a spot of tri-colored light and then to nothing at all. His hand sought hers.

He found himself wishing she would get up on her back legs and yowl, just once. It would be good for both of them. But she was so wonderfully patient! She had said nothing, or little, when he had stubbornly defied the national committee and gone ahead with the reform program that could only have ended his political career, and did. She had barely objected when he told her of his new affiliation with the Beller people, and she had said nothing in these past ten days, when the pressure of conflicting cross-currents had kept him bottled up within himself, unloving, cold.

He tried to say something affectionate, something to repay her for the suffering he had caused, the lonely evenings, the tense breakfasts.

But she spoke first. "They still haven't found Senator Thurman, Jim. I heard the nine-thirty newscast. Isn't it terrible, an old man like that disappearing?"

Sudden coldness swept through him. "Still—haven't found him?" he repeated inanely. "Well—I guess—ah—that old buzzard's indestructible. He'll turn up."

"How do you think this will affect the hearing on Monday?"

Harker shrugged, only half-listening. He was thinking, *You know damn well where Thurman is, and you're afraid to tell her. Why don't you speak up? Don't you trust your own wife?* He wet his dry lips. "I—I suppose they'll choose a new chairman if something's happened to Thurman. But—"

"Jim, are you all right? You look terrible!"

"Lois, I—want to tell you something. Today—"

He stopped, wondering how to go on. She was staring intently at him, curious but not overly curious, waiting to hear what he had to say.

The phone rang.

Grateful for the interruption, Harker sprang from the couch and darted around back to take the call on the visual set. He activated it; Mart Raymond's face appeared on the screen.

"Well?" Harker said immediately, in a low voice. "Is the evidence all taken care of?"

Raymond nodded agitatedly. "Yes. But that's not what I called you about. Barchet's dead!"

"What? How?"

"It happened about five minutes ago. He was getting ready to leave, and we were discussing—you know, what happened tonight. He had a heart attack and just dropped. It must have been all the excitement. His heart was weak anyway, he once said."

Harker could not repress the

tide of relief that rose in him. Barchet had been the cause of half of his troubles—Mitchison and Klaus, for one, and the Thurman affair for another. Still, a man was dead, and that was no cause for rejoicing, he told himself coldly.

He said, "That's too bad. Did he have a family?"

"Just a wife, but she died years ago. He was alone."

Harker nodded. "You'd better notify the local police right away."

"Jim, what's the matter with you?" Raymond asked incredulously.

"What do you mean?"

"Barchet's in the operating room now. Vogel's getting ready to try a reanimation on him."

"No!" Harker said instantly.

"No? Jim, we can't just let him die like that!"

"Barchet was a troublemaker, Mart. He was the weak link in the organization. Now we're rid of him; let him stay dead. It's one less witness to the thing that happened today."

In a shocked whisper Raymond said, "You can't mean what you're saying, Jim."

"I mean exactly what you're hearing. Barchet was unstable, Mart. He pressured you into doing all sorts of cockeyed things. If he lived, he'd end up revealing the Thurman business before long. Let him stay dead. That's an order, Mart."

Raymond seemed to shrink back from the screen. "It's—almost like committing murder, Jim! That man could be saved if we—"

"No," Harker said, with a firmness he did not feel. "There'll be trouble if you cross me, Mart. Good night."

He broke the contact with a shaky hand.

Lois gasped when she saw him. "Jim! It must be bad news. You're utterly white."

He sat down heavily. "One of the Beller executives just had a heart attack. A man named Barchet—a runty little fellow who enjoyed sticking lead pipes between the spokes of smoothly running machines. I just ordered Mart Raymond not to attempt reanimation."

His hands were quivering. Lois took them between hers. Harker said, "It's like murder, isn't it? To refuse to reanimate a man, when it's possible to do so. But it's better for everyone if Barchet stays dead. Nobody will miss him. God, I feel awful."

"Remember the McDermott case, Jim?"

He frowned, then smiled at her. "Yes," he said. McDermott had been a factory hand, an overgrown moron of 22 who had beaten his 70-year-old father to death one night shortly before Harker had become Governor of

New York. The verdict had been speedy, the sentence one of execution. With the boy in the death house and the night of the execution at hand, his aged mother had relented, lost her vindictiveness, pleaded with the new Governor Harker to commute the sentence.

The boy had had a long criminal record. The court had found him guilty. He had murdered his father in cold blood, premeditatively. He deserved the full penalty.

Harker had refused to commute. But then he had spent the rest of the evening staring at his watch, and at the stroke of midnight had burst into an attack of chills.

He nodded slowly now. "I refused to commute Barchet's sentence. That's all there is to it."

CHAPTER XVI

THE NEWSPAPERS Saturday morning gave full play to the Thurman disappearance. Several of them ran biographies of the missing Senator, tracing his political career from the early founding days of the National-Liberal Party to his present anti-reanimation stand.

The police and FBI statements were simply mechanical handouts, repeats of last night's assurances that no stone would be left unturned. Harker read them with some amusement. He had slept well, and a good deal of last night's tension had departed from him.

He had come to a calming conclusion: Raymond and Barchet had done a violent thing, but these were violent times. Somehow he would have to forget about the shocking Thurman affair and continue along the path already entered upon.

The obituary pages contained one item worth note:

SIMEON BARCHET

Simeon Barchet of 201 Princeton Road, Rockville Centre, L.I., treasurer of the Beller Research Laboratories, died of a heart attack at the Beller office in Litchfield, New Jersey, yesterday. His age was 61.

Mr. Barchet joined the organization of the late oil operator D. F. Beller in 2014, after serving as a vice-president of the Chase Manhattan Bank. Upon Mr. Beller's death ten years later, he became a trustee of the Beller Fund and participated actively in the operation of the laboratory in Litchfield.

He left no survivors. His wife, the former Elsie Tyler, died in 2029.

Harker felt inward relief. Raymond had not dared to defy him; the reanimation of Barchet had been stopped as he had ordered.

It was only to be expected that

some keen-eyed reader would read the Barchet obit and wonder why an official of the Beller Laboratories had been allowed to die on the premises, when reanimation equipment was right there. No doubt the question would be raised in the afternoon papers, since any news of the Beller researchers rated a good play.

He was not mistaken. At noon Mart Raymond called; he stared somewhat reproachfully at Harker out of the screen and said, "Some reporters just phoned up, Jim. They saw Barchet's obit and want to know how come he wasn't reanimated. What am I supposed to tell them—the truth?"

Harker scowled. "Don't tell them anything. Let me think. Ah—yes. Tell them Barchet was despondent over personal affairs, and left a memo imploring us not to reanimate him. Naturally, we abided by his last request."

"Naturally," Raymond said acidly. "Okay. I'll tell them. It sounds halfway plausible, anyway."

The newspapers moved fast. By nightfall the story had been promoted to the front pages, generally headed with something like BELLER MAN CHOOSES DEATH. The editorial pages of the *Star-Post's* evening edition had an interesting comment:

NATURAL DEATH OR SUICIDE?

Yesterday Simeon Barchet, an executive of the now-famous Beller Laboratories, died suddenly of a heart attack. According to his colleagues at Beller, Mr. Barchet had been in a despondent frame of mind and left instructions that he was not to be reanimated.

The situation exposed a new facet of the already-explosive reanimation situation. Can willful refusal to undergo reanimation be considered suicide? According to time-honored principles of law, suicide or attempted suicide is an illegal act. In this case, the odd paradox arises of a man already dead committing what can only be termed suicide. Should reanimation be given the cachet of legal approval during the forthcoming Congressional hearings, then it is clear that a testament forbidding reanimation will reach beyond the grave to bind the dead man's survivors, counsel, and physicians in a conspiracy to abet suicide.

Obviously this is an impossible state of affairs. It demonstrates once again that the staggering Beller Laboratories success, which renders death in many cases merely temporary, will unavoidably bring about a massive revolution in our codes of legal and medical ethics, and indeed a change in our entire manner of life.

As he looked through the heap of newspapers, Harker began to

feel that the tide was turning. The hysteria was dying down. Men were realizing that reanimation was no grisly joke, no hoax, but something real that had been developed and which could not be stamped out. There were relatively few cries for wholesale suppression of the process. A Fundamentalist minister from Kansas had got his name into the papers by demanding immediate destruction of all equipment and plans for reanimation apparatus, but his was an isolated voice.

The tone of the *Star-Post* editorial seemed to be the tone of the concensus. Men of intelligence were saying, *Reanimation exists, for good or evil. Let's study it for a while and find out what it can do and how it will change society. Let's not scream for its suppression, but let's not unleash it entirely before we know what we're letting loose.*

The most authoritative of the secular anti-reanimation voices had belonged to Clyde Thurman, and that voice now was stilled. The act had been one of colossal audacity and thoughtlessness, and even now Harker found it difficult to endure the memory of the noble old warrior's mindless eyes; but, he had to admit it, it had silenced a potent force for suppression.

Perhaps these were times for violence and audacity, Harker thought.

In that case I'm the wrong man for my job. But it's too late to help that now.

SUNDAY'S PAPERS continued the general trend toward reasonable consideration of the reanimation case, and also reported no progress in the search for the missing Senator. It was learned that the reanimation hearings would begin as scheduled on Monday—not in Washington, though, but in New York. Late Sunday evening a messenger appeared at Harker's door and handed him a document.

It was a subpoena, requesting him to be present at 10:00 the following morning at the Hotel Manhattan, where the Congressional hearings would begin.

Harker arrived there half an hour early. The hearings were taking place in a meeting-room on the nineteenth floor of the big hotel. Federal law required the presence of the press at Congressional hearings; television cameras were already set up, and at the back of the room Harker saw the four senators who had visited the labs: Brewster, Vorys, Dixon, Westmore. Two American-Conservatives, two National-Liberals. The fifth seat had been left vacant, obviously for Thurman; but Thurman would not be likely to take part in the hearings, though only a few men knew that fact with any certainty.

Mart Raymond was there already, wearing not his stained lab smock but a surprisingly natty tweed tuit. Vogel had been subpoenaed too, but not Lurie. Next to Raymond sat a plumpish woman Harker had never seen before; she was middle-aged and dressed in an obsolete fashion.

"Jim, I want you to meet someone," Raymond called to him as soon as Harker entered. He crossed the room to the front row of seats and Raymond said, "This is Mrs. Beller. She's acting as representative for the Beller Fund since Barchet died."

"Dreadful, about poor Mr. Barchet," the woman said, in a highly masculine baritone. "Pleased to meet you, Mr. Harker. I've heard so much about you. My late husband was deeply interested in your career."

I'm damned sure of that, Harker thought. For as many years as he could remember, the name of Darwin F. Beller had headed the list of contributors to the annual American-Conservative Party campaign fund. He said aloud, "How do you do, Mrs. Beller."

He looked toward the platform where the senators sat. Brewster looked grim, Vorys peeved; Dixon and Westmore, the Nat-Lib members of the commission, both wore identical uneasy smiles.

Television cameramen seemed to be underfoot everywhere, checking camera angles, adjusting mike booms, testing the lighting. A small, harried-looking man with close-cropped hair came scurrying up to him, jabbed a microphone under his nose, and said, "Mr. Harker, would you mind saying a couple of words into this?"

"What do you want me to say?"

"That's fine, sir. Now you, Mr. Raymond, and then after that I'd like to hear the lady speak."

It was a voice-test. Someone yelled out, "Harker's fine! Raymond could use more resonance!"

"Would you mind getting more *chest* into your voice, Mr. Raymond?"

"I'll do my best," Raymond said.

The man with the microphone scurried away.

Harker watched the time on the big clock above the dais. Ten minutes to ten. The room was slowly filling up, not only with newspapermen. Raymond pointed out a couple of well-known medical men; Harker spotted two lawyers, including one who had issued a ringing denunciation of reanimation a week before.

At ten sharp Senator Westmore rose, smiled apologetically at the video camera, and said, "Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. As acting chairman of the Senate Special Investigating Committee dealing with the problem of discoveries of the Beller Research

Laboratories, I hereby ask for your attention and call this meeting to order."

The room fell silent. In the hush, the throbbing purr of the official stenographer's recording machine was clearly audible. After a pause Westmore went on, "We begin this session in the absence of our chairman, Senator Thurman of New York. I'm sure you'll all join me in the hope that the beloved Senator is safe, wherever he is, and that his unusual absence will soon be explained. However, the, shall we say, delicate nature of the Beller discoveries makes it imperative that this Committee elicit facts and present its findings to Congress immediately, and so we are proceeding on schedule despite our chairman's absence.

"Our purpose is to draw forth information on the subject of reanimation. First I think it is well to question the director of the laboratory which developed the technique, Mr. Martin Raymond."

Raymond rose, a trifle awkwardly, and as he did so Senator Vorys requested permission to question him. Permission was granted.

Vorys said, in his thin, penetrating voice, "Dr. Raymond, you recognize me, do you not, as a member of the group of United States Senators who visited your laboratories recently?"

"I recognize you. You were there."

"In our presence you applied your animation technique to a twelve-year-old boy. Am I correct?"

"You are."

"The boy was dead?"

"He had drowned the day before."

"And where is this boy now?"

Raymond said, "Recuperating from the after-effects of his experience. He's in good health, but still pretty weak."

"Ah. Would it be possible for you to bring this boy to a session of this Committee?"

"I don't believe so, Senator. The boy's not ready for any travelling yet. And it would violate our policy to present him to the video audience. We try to keep the identity of our patients secret."

"Why do you do that?"

"To protect them. Reanimation is still in its early stages. The social implications are still unclear."

"Ah. Would you object if the members of this Committee paid the boy a visit, then, to ascertain the current state of his health?"

"That could be arranged," Raymond said.

There was a moment of silence. Vorys stared keenly at Raymond and said, "Would you trace briefly for us the history of your laboratory, the nature of your process, and the results you have obtained so far."

Speaking easily and freely now, Raymond told of the original Beller bequest, the gathering-together of the laboratory staff, the early failures. He outlined a rough sketch of the technique as it was now practiced. "To date we've had about seventy successful reanimations," he finished.

"And how many failures have there been?"

"About ten out of the seventy. Previous to our first successful reanimation we had thirty consecutive failures."

"I see. And what is the nature of these failures?"

Raymond began to fidget. "Ah —well, we don't succeed in restoring life."

"The body remains inanimate?"

"Yes. Most of the time, that is. I mean—"

It was too late. Vorys pounced on the slip gleefully and said, "Most of the time, Dr. Raymond? I don't quite understand. Does that mean that some of your failures result in actual reanimation, or *partial* reanimation? Will you make yourself clear?"

Panicky, Raymond glanced at Harker, who shrugged and nodded resignedly. *It had to come out eventually,* Harker thought.

The squirming Raymond was a pitiful sight under the merciless lights. He said in a hopeless voice, "I guess I ought to be more specific."

"That would help, Dr. Raymond."

"Well," Raymond said, "Counting the boy we reanimated when you were at the labs, Senator, we've had 72 reanimations since the first success. No, 73. In 62 of those cases, we've had c-complete success. In four others, it was impossible for us to restore life at all. And in the remaining seven"—*now it comes out,* Harker thought—"we achieved reanimation with partial success."

"In what way partial?" Vorys pressed.

Raymond had run out of evasions. He said, "We restored the body to functional activity. We were unable to achieve a similar restoration of the mind, in those seven cases."

CHAPTER XVII

THE NEWSPAPERS had a field day with Raymond's unwilling revelation. Even the traditionally sedate *Times* devoted six of its eight columns to a banner headline about it, and a story which began,

Public faith in the Beller reanimation process was seriously shaken today by the surprising revelation that reanimation sometimes produces a mentally deficient individual.

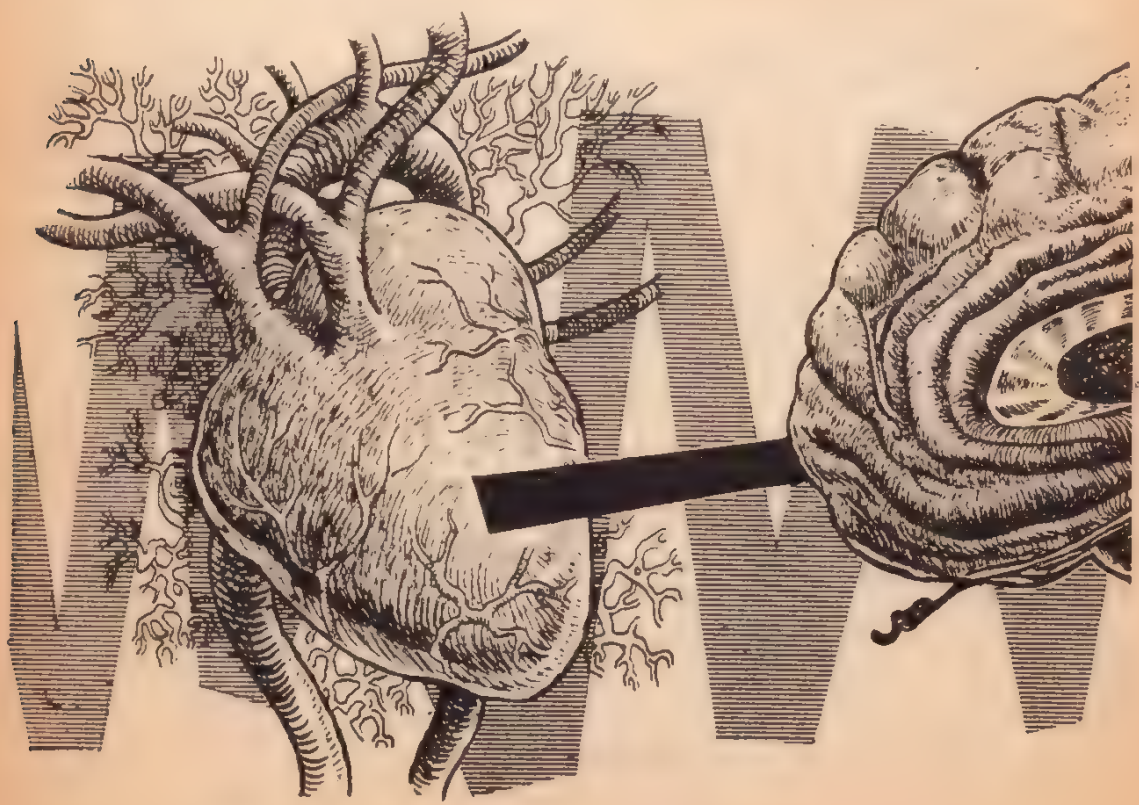
Dr. Martin Raymond, head of the Beller research organization, made the statement in New York

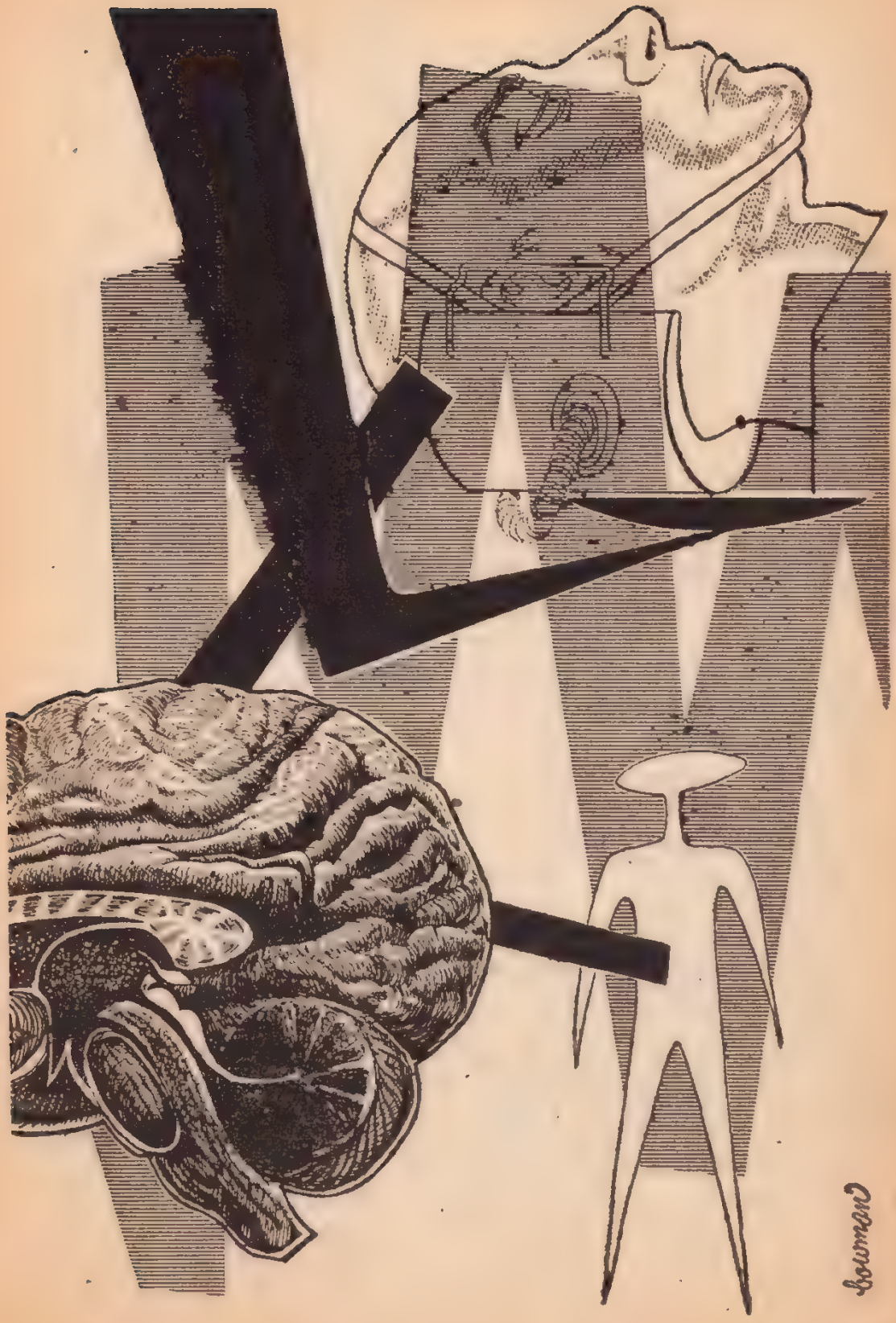
at the opening session of Senate reanimation hearings. He declared that seven out of seventy-three experimental reanimations had produced "mindless beings." In four other instances, neither body nor mind was successfully recalled to life.

In the other papers, it was even worse. The *Star-Post,* which had been growing more sympathetic each day, demanded atop its editorial column, WHY HAVE THEY BEEN HIDING THIS? The Hearst papers, which had *never* been sympathetic to the cause of reanimation, grew almost apoplectic now; their key slogan was the label, "The Zombie-Makers," which they used in reference to the Beller researchers not only in the editorial (a vitriolic one) but even in several of the news columns.

At the Litchfield headquarters, the flood of abusive mail threatened to overpower the local postmaster. It was impossible to read it all, and after Harker picked up a scrawled letter that threatened assassination for him and his entire family unless reanimation experiments ceased, he decided to read none of it at all. They stored it in one of the supply-buildings in back, and Harker gave orders that any overflow was to be destroyed unread.

On the second day of hearing, a few new faces were in the audi-




Bowman

torium. They were faces Harker did not enjoy seeing. They belonged to Cal Mitchison and David Klaus, and with them was their lawyer, Gerhardt.

With Senator Thurman still not found, Brewster presided at the second session—a heavy-set, slow-moving man with the ponderously tenacious mind that went with those physical characteristics. With the opening formalities out of the way, Brewster said, "We would like to hear from Dr. David Klaus, formerly of the Beller Research Laboratories."

Harker was on his feet immediately. "Senator Brewster, I'd like to enter an objection. This man is the principal in a lawsuit pending against our laboratory. Anything he says in his favor this morning may be prejudicial to us in the lawsuit."

Brewster shook his head slowly. "This is not a court of law, Mr. Harker. We are interested in hearing Dr. Klaus' statements. You will have ample time to refute them later, if you wish."

Harker subsided. Brewster looked at Klaus, who stood with his hands knotted nervously together, a thin, slab-jawed scrawny bright - young - scientific - prodigy type. "Dr. Klaus, you were formerly employed by the Beller Laboratories, were you not? Would you mind telling us why your employment there was terminated?"

Stammering as usual, Klaus said, "I was discharged by order of James Harker shortly after he came to work there. It was a purely malicious act."

Harker fumed, but Brewster waved imperiously at him to keep him quiet. The Senator said, "Please keep personal differences out of this, Dr. Klaus. How long were you employed at the laboratories?"

"Three years. I was in charge of enzyme research."

"I see. And you were aware that the reanimation experiments were occasionally producing—ah—idiots?"

"Yes, sir. We all were aware of that."

"Were attempts being made to safeguard against this unfortunate result, Dr. Klaus?"

Klaus nodded. "My department was working on a chemical method of insuring full recovery of mental powers. I don't know what's been done since my dismissal."

"He's lying!" Raymond shouted. "His group never had anything to do with—"

"Please, Mr. Raymond," Brewster said fiercely. "Your outburst is uncalled-for."

To Klaus he said, "Do you feel that this hazard of the reanimation process can be overcome in the course of further research?"

"Definitely. But the present management of the laboratories is heading in the wrong direction.

They've rejected my ideas—which were close to being perfected—and instead chose to suppress the whole affair."

Harker felt his pulse mounting. Klaus seemed icily calm up there, speaking now with cold precision—most unusual for him. He sounded as if he had rehearsed this speech all morning.

Brewster said, "It would seem to me that the directors of the Beller Laboratories were guilty of an act of bad faith. Wouldn't you agree, Dr. Klaus?

"Definitely, sir."

"Thank you. We would like to hear from Mr. James Harker, now."

Moistening his lips, Harker rose and took his place in the spotlight. Brewster gave place to Dixon, for which Harker was thankful; the American-Conservative Senators had a way of conducting hearings as if they were representatives of the Spanish Inquisition.

Dixon said, "Would you tell us how you became affiliated with the Beller outfit, Mr. Harker?"

"I was approached by Dr. Lurie of Beller," Harker said. "I had retired to private law practice after conclusion of my term as Governor of New York State. Dr. Lurie requested me to handle the legal aspects of reanimation."

"Ah. How long have you been connected with Beller, then?"

"Dr. Lurie first approached me on May 8. Roughly three weeks ago, Senator Dixon."

"And you have acted as spokesman for the laboratory since May 8?"

"No sir. My first public statement for Beller appeared on May 20. It was occasioned by the premature and unauthorized release of information to the public by Dr. Klaus and our then public-relations agent, Mr. Mitchison. This was the act of insubordination for which they were dismissed from the laboratory."

"You infer that the first public announcement of the Beller reanimation experiments was made without your consent or knowledge?"

"That's right, sir."

"Why did you intend to maintain continued secrecy?"

"The process was not quite perfect, sir. A few more weeks of work and we could have eliminated the possibility of mental loss. It was my plan not to bring the matter to the public notice until then—but Dr. Klaus took it upon himself to inform the world without my knowledge."

Harker glanced at Brewster and Vorys. They were frowning; perhaps he had gotten through to them. He wondered if his words would counteract the tide of unfavorable reactions already swelling.

Dixon said, "Could you tell us how close you are to actual elimination of the hazard of insanity?"

"Sorry, I can't. That would be Dr. Raymond's province. But I will say that research at our laboratory has virtually ceased during this period of uncertainty."

There was a whispered conference at the dais, and abruptly Vorys replaced Dixon as interrogator.

"Mr. Harker, does the name Wayne Janson mean anything to you?"

Brewster and Vorys had evidently primed themselves well for the attack. Harker said, "Yes, Senator Vorys. Janson was an industrialist who committed suicide last week."

"It means nothing else to you?"

"No."

"No one of that name underwent reanimation at the Beller Laboratories?"

"No, sir."

Vorys paused momentarily. "The late Mr. Janson was supposed to have undergone reanimation several months before your employment at Beller. Is it possible that he *did* experience treatment there, and that you don't know about it?"

"I've examined the list of patients at Beller since the beginning of experiments there. No one named Janson is on the list."

"Perhaps he entered under another name."

"We have photographs of all patients, Senator. None of them corresponded to the photo of Mr. Janson published in the newspapers."

"In other words, you deny that he was ever a patient of the laboratories?"

"Exactly."

"But a close friend of the late Mr. Janson claims that he *did* secretly enter the Beller laboratories of his own free will shortly before his death of natural causes, was reanimated, and suffered such mental disturbance afterward that he took his own life."

Harker said quietly, "It's obvious that one party is lying, isn't it? Our records indicate that no such person ever entered the labs for treatment. The burden of proof, I believe, rests with the other party."

"We have only your word for this," Vorys went on obstinately. "And you are not even under oath. Will you make these records of yours available for public inspection?"

"It would be against our policy."

"We could subpoena the records," Vorys warned.

Harker shrugged. "That's within your rights, of course, I admit. But exposure of the names of our patients would probably have adverse effects on them, pathologically and otherwise."

"That sounds very good, Mr. Harker. But it could also be an excuse for hiding something."

Resisting the impulse to lose

his temper—for Vorys was obviously deliberately baiting him—Harker said, "I believe it would be possible to grant you and your three colleagues access to our records, to prove the fraudulent nature of the Janson matter. But public exposure of the names would not be necessary, would it?"

"Quite possibly not. Thank you, Mr. Harker. We will recess for one hour now."

As soon as Harker had left the stand, Mart Raymond approached him and said, "Things are getting rough, eh?"

Harker nodded. "Vorys and Brewster are out for our scalps. The American-Conservatives must be preparing to come down hard."

"I'm sorry about letting that statistic slip yesterday, Jim—"

"Forget it. It had to come out sooner or later, and maybe if we had announced it at the start we wouldn't be having so much trouble now. Well, it couldn't be helped. Let's go get some lunch."

As they rode downward in the gravshaft toward the hotel dining room, Harker said, "Exactly how close *are* you to getting the bugs out of the process?"

Raymond looked vague. "A week, a month, maybe a year. We know what causes the mental breakdown—most of the time. It's a matter of hormone impurity, generally. Of course, in some cases the brain suffers severe damage in the process of dying, and we'll never be able to lick that any more than we can revive a man who's been blown apart by dynamite. But I'm pretty sure we can lick the defects in our own system soon."

"And what probability of success would you predict after that?"

Raymond shrugged and said, "Who knows? Nine out of ten successes? Ninety-seven out of a hundred? Until we have ten or twenty thousand case histories behind us, our statistics don't mean a hoot."

Harker nodded thoughtfully. The meal was a quiet one; neither man said much. Harker was going back over the morning's session, trying to pick out the phrases the press would leap on.

He hoped he had discredited the Mitchison-Klaus combine and Bryant by his refutation. Surely the public would see that Mitchison and Klaus were vengeful power-seekers and nothing more, and that the whole Janson affair was nothing but a malicious hoax.

But he overestimated the public's ability to distinguish truth from slung mud, it seemed. The early afternoon papers were already on sale by the time the hearing resumed for the afternoon.

The headline on the *Star-Post* was, KLAUS SAYS HARKER FIRED HIM; CHARGES BELLER 'BAD FAITH'.

The story, slanted heavily in Klaus' direction, implied that the

enzyme man had been on the verge of a brilliant discovery when Harker maliciously sacked him. As for the Janson case, it referred to Harker's "uncomfortable evasions."

The tide was turning. The public fancy had seized on the one fact, grotesque and horrifying enough, that in a few cases reanimation resulted in dreadful mindlessness. On that slim base, a massive movement aimed at the total suppression of reanimation was beginning to take form and grow in strength.

Harker had seen the phenomenon before, and had been helpless before it. The great insane raging tide of public opinion had sprung up from what had been a smoothly-flowing stream, and once its mighty power had been channelled toward a definite end, there was no standing against it.

He had the uncomfortable feeling that only a miracle could save things, now. And miracles were not easy to come by, in this secular age.

CHAPTER XVIII

As the hearing ground along into its third day, and its fourth, and then its fifth and sixth, things grew even worse. The "zombie" phrase became a favorite, not only of the press and the public, but even of Brewster and Vorys. The fact that seven of seventy-three reanimation subjects had been revived sans intellect had become the main issue. In his rare moments of relaxation, Harker wondered how the world would react if it were ever learned that one of those seven had been none other than the missing Senator Thurman.

Very much as Harker had expected, the American-Conservative Party intensified its previous belief in "caution" into what amounted to condemnation of the whole process. Maxwell of Vermont, the Senate Minority Leader, delivered an off-the-cuff but probably carefully rehearsed speech at a Chicago gathering of American-Conservative committeemen, in which he referred to reanimation as "That mess engineered by a one-time lame duck of a National-Liberal, that unholy conspiracy against human dignity."

Later the same day, the chairman of the Nat-Lib national committee was quick to announce that James Harker had voluntarily severed his party connections in January, was now a private citizen, and in no way represented the membership of the National-Liberal Party. It was a neat disavowal that took the Nat-Libs off the hook in case the reaction against reanimation grew stronger, but left them an avenue of entry just in case public opinion should swing back in favor of Harker.

Work at the lab had come practically to a standstill. "If we only had a few more weeks," Raymond mourned, "we might be able to lick the remaining defects and get public approval. But they won't leave us alone to work."

A delegation of FBI men and the four investigating senators visited the laboratory a week after the hearings had begun, and Raymond and Harker reluctantly showed them the data on the revivifications so far—excluding that of Senator Thurman, which had not been recorded in any way whatever.

They checked through the photos, compared them with those of Wayne Janson, and left. That night the FBI issued an official statement which read, in part, *"Examination of the Beller Laboratories records does not indicate that the late Mr. Janson ever received treatment there. Since there is nothing in Janson's own private papers that leads us to believe he as much as knew of the existence of the Beller organization prior to its public announcement, we must conclude that no reanimation did take place."*

This left Jonathan Bryant in an ambiguous position, since he continued to maintain that Janson *had* undergone reanimation, and had suffered a severe change in personality as a result, leading to his suicide.

"This ought to settle Jonathan for good," Harker crowed when the text of the FBI exoneration reached him. After all, it had to be obvious to everyone that Bryant had perpetrated a hoax designed solely to discredit reanimation and arouse popular fears against it.

But again Harker was wrong. The day after publication of the FBI statement, Jonathan Bryant was subpoenaed to appear before the investigating committee. The questioner was Senator Vorys. The interchange between Bryant and Vorys was widely reported in the late editions that day:

SENATOR VORYS: *You knew the late Wayne Janson well?*

BRYANT: *I was his closest friend.*

VORYS: *When did he first mention reanimation to you?*

BRYANT: *About January. He said his doctor had told him about the experiments going on in Litchfield.*

VORYS: *What is the name of this doctor?*

BRYANT: *I'm sorry, I don't know, Senator Vorys.*

VORYS: *Very well. Go ahead.*

BRYANT: *Well, Wayne suffered a stroke in February and he told me that he was going to Litchfield, that he felt close to death and was volunteering for reanimation.*

VORYS (Interrupting): *The FBI did check and found that*

Janson had been away from home during February and March.

BRYANT: *Yes, sir. Well, Janson came home late in March and told me of his experiences. He seemed moody, depressed, very different from usual. I tried without success to cheer him up. Then one night several weeks ago he phoned me and said he was going to end it all, to jump off the George Washington Bridge. In his conversation he attributed his desire for death to a morbid change that had come over his mind as a result of the Beller treatment.*

VORYS: *You're aware, are you not, of the FBI statement which says that to the best of their knowledge Janson never had any contact with the Beller people?*

BRYANT: *Of course. The key phrase there is "to the best of their knowledge." I have no doubt that the Beller people have suppressed this case as they've suppressed so many other things since James Harker started running them.*

The ten-minute colloquy between Vorys and Bryant, widely quoted and republished everywhere, served not only to discredit the FBI statement utterly, but to convince the public that Harker had indeed suppressed the records of the Janson reanimation.

A magnificent scientific discovery discredited because of a ten percent imperfection. An FBI investigation thrown into the rubbish-heap because of one man's bitter determination to crush an old enemy.

Harker studied the newspapers each day with increasing bitterness. The original importance of the Beller process seemed to be getting lost under the welter of side-issues, the jackal-like snapping of Klaus-Mitchison and Bryant, the political fencing of the two great parties, the hysteria of the people when faced with something new and beyond easy acceptance.

Only one issue had not been raised yet—luckily, for it was the deadliest of all, having a basis of truth. No one had accused the Beller people of murdering Senator Thurman.

It was a logical accusation, against the background of insane charges already raised. After all, Thurman had been the most vigorous and most important of the enemies of reanimation, and he had disappeared on the eve of the hearings themselves! It seemed obvious to Harker that *someone* would think of implying that the Beller group had done away with their tough, intractable enemy.

But no one raised the cry, perhaps because it was too obvious. A thousandth time, Harker was grateful for that momentary impulse of steely purposefulness that had led him to condemn Barchet

to continuing death. Of the six people who had known the fate of Senator Thurman, only Barchet was likely to crack and reveal the truth—and Barchet was out of the picture now.

THE EIGHTH DAY of the hearing came and went; Vorys grilled poor Lurie mercilessly on minor scientific details, while Brewster got Vogel to explain some of the surgical fine points of the reanimation technique.

"You have to admire those two boys," Harker said after that session. "They've really brushed up on the pertinent subjects."

"I haven't had a quizzing like that since I left medical school," Vogel said, nervously tugging at the dark strands of his beard.

"And for what?" Raymond wanted to know. "Just to use up the taxpayers' money. They've found out all they want to know about us."

Harker nodded gloomily. You only had to pick up any newspaper, listen to any reasonably right-wing news commentator, attend any church, even walk in the street and talk to people at random.

The response was the same. Fear.

Fear of reanimation; fear of that one-chance-out-of-six that the result would be a so-called "zombie." Desperately Harker tried to counteract the swelling tide of fear. He scraped up money for a full-page ad in the *Times*, headed, THROW OUT THE BABY WITH THE BATHWATER?

His line of argument was that the reanimation process should not be condemned for its failures, but praised for its successes. It was in the early stages, the experimental years. What if aviation had been suppressed because of the early crashes? Research had to go on.

The response to the advertisement was a lessening of hysteria in responsible places; the *Times* itself echoed his feelings in its own editorial the next day. But he sensed he was not reaching the people. And the people feared reanimation. There was no doubt of that, now.

The hearing rolled along into early June, and then one day Dixon announced that this was the last week; the committee would enter private deliberations preparatory to delivering its findings to the Senate as a whole.

Harker approached Senator Dixon privately and said, "Tell me, Senator — how are our chances?"

The Wyoming liberal frowned quizzically. "Hard to say. The Committee's deadlocked two-and-two, you see. We may fight all summer about it."

"Vorys and Brewster are dead against it?"

"Absolutely. They heed the

voice of the people, you see. Every minority party has to. It's the way they become a majority again."

Harker said doubtfully, "How's the feeling in high Nat-Lib circles?"

Dixon shrugged. "Right now, the feeling runs toward taking the Beller labs over and continuing reanimation research under federal supervision—with you and Raymond still in charge, of course."

"Fine!"

"Not so fast," Dixon warned. "We've got a Congressional majority, but that doesn't mean a thing. The way the people are murmuring, it looks pretty bad for getting that measure through."

"You mean you may have to switch your stand?"

Dixon nodded. "Jim, you know all about political expediency. You tried to knock down the stone wall when you were Governor, and got nowhere. If the people say, 'Junk reanimation,' then we'll have to junk it."

Hotly Harker said, "Junk it? The way I was junked as Governor?"

Dixon smiled. "I'm afraid so. It's this business of the seven idiots, Jim. That scares people more than you can imagine."

"But we can lick that problem —eventually!"

"Maybe you can. But the voters don't believe that. All they see is the short-range possibility. And they're more afraid of having a loved one turn into a zombie than they are of death. After all, you can't very well kill your wife or son or father if you've had him reanimated and he turns out to be an idiot. You have to go on supporting him. It's pretty frightening."

Doggedly Harker said, "I think we can get over that particular hump."

"Then reanimation's in. Jim, I'm not so foolish as to think that we can ever go back to where we were two months ago. The Beller process exists; it can't be destroyed. But it can be batted around in committee and sidechannelled and circumvented until the time is ripe for popular acceptance. And the Party may have to do that to you, though I hope it doesn't happen."

"Do you think it will, though?"

Again the sad smile. "Read the newspapers, man. Read your mail!"

HARKER read his mail.

He ploughed through hundreds of vicious, sweat-provoking letters. He sorted them out: favorable on one side, unfavorable on the other. The *unfavorable* pile grew so high it toppled over, and he started a new one; the pile of encouraging letters was no more than three inches thick.

They were letters of raw hate,

most of them. The kind of thing that went, *My beloved mother/-father/sister/brother/son/daughter /aunt /uncle /grandmother /-grandfather died last week, and I want to tell you she/he had a decent Christian burial and went to his/her eternal repose. Naturally I feel sorrow at my loss, but I'd rather be dead myself than let a loved one of mine get into your hands. Sure, maybe you'll bring him/her back to life—but who wants to see the hollow mindless shell of someone you once loved? Not me, brother. Not me.*

It was an enlarging experience to read those letters. Even when he had held public office, Harker had never received so many, nor such loaded ones.

It was astonishing. They gloated in the triumph of death, they thanked God they had not allowed their beloved ones to be reanimated, they extended curses for Harker and his whole family. *He* was the target of their hate, the symbol for reanimation.

At first he was irritated, then angered; anger passed, and turned into compassion. Perhaps some of these same people had written to him a month ago, pleading to have a loved one restored to them by the new miracle of science. Now, confused by the haze of conflicting tales, of lies and partial truths, their earlier willingness turned to repulsion.

Harker wearily baled the letters up again, and left Litchfield to spend some time with his puzzled, unhappy family. They were accustomed to seeing their father's name in the headlines; it was old stuff to them. But this public hatred was new to them, and difficult for them to understand.

It was not too late, Harker thought. The forces of confusion could be put to rout; the dominion of death could at last have boundaries staked out.

But the public faith had to be regained. Some spectacular demonstration, some act of faith that would capture their imagination and end the dominating sway of ignorance.

But what? How?

Harker had no answer.

CHAPTER XIX

AT LITCHFIELD again, the next day, Harker was reading through a lab report, comprehending not very much of it, when a diffident knock sounded outside his door.

Probably Lurie with the papers, he thought. "Come in!"

A slim figure in ecclesiastical robes entered. Harker blinked and said, "I didn't expect to see *you* here, Father Carteret."

"Nor I. But I thought I would make the trip."

"Sit down," Harker urged. "What's on your mind?"

"Jim, I asked you to come to

me if you ever had any troubles. You have them now. I thought I'd stop over and find out if I could be of any help."

Harker felt faintly irritated. He liked the priest, but he felt no desire for unasked advice. "Father, if you've come to tell me I ought to quit this outfit while I still have my soul, forget it."

"The time for telling you that is past."

Harker stared at the priest coolly. "Then why are you here?"

"To help you. I have a suggestion for you—a rather strange one. But first: let me tell you that the Church is reconsidering its stand."

"What?"

Carteret smiled gently. "The Church moves slowly; don't anticipate anything for the next several years. But I have it on good understanding that as soon as your technique is perfect—that is, as soon as you can restore body and mind every time—the Church will no longer withold its approval from reanimation."

Harker chuckled. "I'd say that bet was pretty well coppered. The *if* there is a pretty big one."

"I know. But a necessary one. I'm praying for your success, Jim."

"*You?* But you warned me away from this thing!"

Carteret nodded. "You took the step anyway. And perhaps I made an original error in judgment."

"Well, that's neither here nor there. Reanimation is going to be squashed by Congress anyway."

"What do you mean?"

"Simply that the defect in the process has aroused such public horror that Congress is afraid to legislate in our favor."

"And you don't expect to overcome that defect?"

"Not immediately. Another six months, maybe—but by that time it'll be too late."

Carteret steepled his long thin fingers reflectively. "You tell me, then, that your real problem is a failure of public relations. If you could sell your product to the people, Congress would follow along."

"In a word, that's it."

"I thought so."

"You said you had a suggestion to make," Harker reminded the priest.

"I did. It's an idea for capturing the stream of public opinion. I'm anxious to see your project succeed, Jim. It may sound strange, coming from my lips, but that's the truth. I suffered to reach this opinion."

"And what's your idea?"

An odd smile appeared on Carteret's thin face. "It's one that bears the test of time, Jim. Our Savior went meekly to the Cross, and on the third day He arose. It was an act that has captured the imaginations and hearts of men for two thousand years."

Harker frowned. "I don't quite see—"

He stopped. Abruptly the deeper meaning of the priest's words was borne in on him, and he stared at Carteret aghast, wondering.

"Would *you* do something like that?" he asked.

"If I had faith in my cause," Carteret said. "Do you have faith in yours?"

Hesitantly Harker said, "I—think so."

"Therein lies the answer, Jim. Think about it a while. Don't rush yourself. I'll leave you now, and let you get used to the idea."

ALONE, Harker stared through the office window at the dark, rain-streaked sky outside. Summer lightning crackled suddenly across the darkness; moments later thunder came rolling down from the hills.

A cold sweat came over him as he revolved Carteret's words in his mind: *Our Savior went meekly to the Cross, and on the third day He arose.*

Do I dare, he wondered?

It was, he knew without doubt, the act that would settle the fate of reanimation for good. With success would come triumph; failure for him unquestionably meant the downfall of the project.

Shall I risk it?

Do I dare?

He thought back over a life that had lasted forty-three years, a comfortable life, most of it spent in easy circumstances as he rose through law school to political prominence, then down the other side of the curve into a short-lived obscurity. He had never known real danger in his life. There had been enemies, of course—political ones, who had worked his downfall. But that was a gentle kind of strife, a chess-game more than a pitched war.

This was different.

This was life or death, on the line—and for what? For a cause. He had never known a cause he might be willing to risk death for. Now that the risk presented itself, he wondered if he had the courage to submit to it.

Harker sat quietly for perhaps half an hour, thinking. Then he reached for the phone and dialed his home number. Lois answered. In a calm, level voice, he told her exactly what he was going to do.

She was silent for a moment; then she said simply, "Jim, why do you have to do this thing?"

How can I explain? he wondered. *How can I show her that a moment can come when you stand between life and death, and the choice is entirely yours?*

He said, "I think it's the only way, Lois. It'll prove to the world that reanimation can be trusted."

"But the awful risk, Jim—"

One chance out of six for idiocy, he thought bleakly. "I

wouldn't do it if I thought it was risky, Lois. The whole point is that it *isn't* risky. You think I want to be a goddam martyr?"

"Sometimes I think you do, Jim," she said very quietly.

He chuckled harshly. "Well, maybe. But I know what I'm doing. It'll hammer home reanimation the way no amount of talking ever could."

After a long pause she said, "When—when would you do this thing?"

"I don't know. I'd have to discuss it with the others here first. And we'd need to arrange for proper publicity. Unless the whole world finds out about it, there's no sense in doing it."

Forty-three years of life converging toward one moment of decision in a bare little room on a rain-soaked New Jersey hill, Harker thought. *And this is probably the weirdest motive for suicide in the history of the human species.*

Lois said, "Do you have that much faith in those men?"

"Yes. How can we expect the people to trust us, if we don't trust ourselves?"

"All right," she said. Her voice held undertones of quiet resignation. "I guess I ought to fight and cry and tell you not to do it, but I know you too well, Jim. Go ahead, if you think you have to do this thing. I—I guess you might as well have my permission, because I know you'll go ahead and do it anyway."

There was the hint of a crack in her voice. Harker smiled palely, thankful that the roughly-furnished office he had here did not have a visual pickup on the phone. He did not want her to see his face now, for he knew his face was that of a frightened man.

"Everything's going to be okay," he told her, and broke the contact.

It was still raining. He pulled a waterproof from the closet, slung it over his shoulders, and dashed across the clearing to Mart Raymond's office. The sky was dark, gray, bleak.

Raymond was working on records when Harker entered—proceeding mechanically, with the air of a man marking time. They were all marking time, waiting for the Congressional decision.

Harker said, "Mart, tell me something."

"Go ahead."

"How close are you to ironing out the business of loss of mind?"

Raymond shrugged. "I told you. A month's more work, maybe. A little less, if we're lucky."

Nodding, Harker said quietly, "Look here, Mart: I'm going to pull a Mitchison."

"Huh?"

"I mean, I'm going to jump the gun and announce that you've *already* straightened things up, and that from now on reanima-

tion will work every time, provided no vital organs are damaged and that decay hasn't begun."

"What's the point of doing that? It isn't so."

"It *will* be so, sooner or later. Sooner, I hope. But I have an idea for a sort of publicity stunt, a grandstand play that should clinch the idea of reanimation's safety. Or else finish us altogether."

Harker walked to the window and stared out. Raymond said, "Jim, what the dickens are you talking about?"

Harker turned sharply. "Very simple. We're going to give a public demonstration of reanimation, sometime in the next couple of days. In order to prove the absolute safety of the process. I'm going to allow you to kill me under laboratory conditions and bring me back to life."

"Are you crazy?"

"Desperate. It's not quite the same thing."

"But suppose it doesn't work? What if—you remember how Thurman looked?"

"I do. I'll take my chances. If it doesn't work, then we're not much worse off than we are now." Harker turned again and stared out the window.

The rain had stopped; the sun was out. A rainbow arched proudly across the low hills, a many-colored ribbon stretching out to the horizon.

HARKER drafted two press releases during the afternoon, and by nightfall they had reached print in the newspapers. Both caused sensations.

At seven that evening he tuned in the video at one of the laboratory dorm lounges, and heard a news commentator say, *"Exciting news from the Beller Research Laboratories of New Jersey today. The last technical flaw in the reanimation process has been licked, according to lab director Martin Raymond. The Beller Lab statement declared that from now on reanimation will be virtually foolproof, with no risk of possible insanity as before.*

"As if to drive home the importance of this new development, a simultaneous statement comes from James Harker, who of course is closely affiliated with the reanimation researchers. Harker let it be known this afternoon that he is suffering from a rare heart ailment, one which has been hitherto impossible to correct because the necessary surgery cannot be performed on a living man.

"Harker declared that he is so confident of the Beller technique's results that he will submit to the operation, necessitating temporary 'death,' and then will be reanimated at the conclusion of the operation."

Harker listened soberly to this largely fictitious news broadcast. He had no heart ailment; the last

technical flaw had not been eliminated.

But never mind, he thought. The essential fact was the last—the reanimation. The rest was camouflage.

Five chances out of six. He felt oddly calm about his decision. At last he found a cause in which he had faith, and he did not expect to be let down.

CHAPTER XX

THERE SEEMED to be a sheath of fog wrapped around him, or perhaps it was a section of cloud. White, soft, without substance, it buoyed him up. He did not open his eyes. He did not need to; the images he saw against the inner surfaces of his eyelids far eclipsed any the mundane world might hold.

Harker saw glowing masses of color, a sky of red bordered with turquoise, clouds of gold, smaller flecks of chocolate and ultramarine. He heard the distant rumble of voices, or was it the sound of thunder?

He remembered things.

He remembered someone (Mart Raymond?) looking down at him, lips drawn, eyes ringed with shadows, saying, "Jim, do you really want to go through with this thing?"

He remembered Lurie, looking awkward and ungainly. Poor Lurie. Lurie had got him into this whole mess in the beginning, hadn't he?

Lois had been there too, her face a blank emotionless mask. And there had been others—the four senators, Vorys, Brewster, Dixon, Westmore. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. The ghostly riders of death.

Reporters? Video men? Yes, there had been quite a crowd.

Harker stirred gently in the cradling mass of fog that held him. He had never been so comfortable in his life as now, lying in what seemed to be free fall, no weight on him, no conflicts clashing in his tired brain, nothing to do but relax and dream of yesterday.

There's Vogel, he thought. The surgeon wielding his tools. Complex dark many-tendriled machine loomed up over me. Yes.

Vogel is whispering something to someone now; I can't quite catch it.

They lower something over my face. Sweet, too sweet; I breathe deeply.

I sleep. Time passes.

Harker floated gently, guiding himself with his arms, travelling lightly down a river of radiant brightness. No weight. No sensations. Only the endless lovely bath of color, and the distant rumble of thunder.

This is heaven, he thought pleasantly. Not a bad place at all.

Timeless, voiceless, airless, life-

less. A kaleidoscope of blues and violets overhead. I am pure energy, he thought, unfettered by the ties of flesh.

This is the kingdom of death. There was the odor of lillies somewhere, a cool sweet white smell. I, James Harker, being of sound mind—

A golden flame, child-sized, soared near him in the nothingness. It's Eva, he thought. Hello, Eva. Don't you remember your dad?

The golden flame swooped laughingly past him and was gone. Harker felt a momentary pang, but it too passed on; this was heaven, where there was no sadness.

The rumble of thunder grew louder.

(Voices?)

(Here? Harker thought.*)*

I have given myself voluntarily into the hands of death, he announced silently. Of my own free will did I consent to have the sanctity of my body violated and the free passage of air through my nostrils interfered with. And with the stoppage of the heart came death.

Frowning, he tried to remember more. Recollection grew dim, though, as if he were glimpsing the world he had left behind through a series of warped mirrors. He could see faintly into the world of living people, but the surface was oddly glazed, unreal.

Again came thunder, louder, closer.

Someone said, "I think he's waking up."

Harker remained perfectly still, struggling to penetrate the meaning of those words. *I think he's waking up.*

Waking up? From death?

"He's definitely coming out of it."

Yes, Harker thought, I'm waking up. Returning to the blurred world I left behind so long ago.

He was still bound to that world. It would not release its grip on him. It wanted him, was calling him.

Recalled to life!

With a sudden convulsive moan and whimper, Harker woke.

HIS MOUTH tasted cottony, and at first his eyes would not focus. Gradually the world took shape about him. He saw three faces hovering above the bed in which he lay; behind them were green electroluminescent hospital walls, broken by a window through which warm summer sunshine streamed in. Yes, he thought. Recalled to life. *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil . . .*

He matched faces with identities. The squarish face badly in need of a shave—that belonged to Mart Raymond. The oval one, ringed by blonde hair shading into gray—that face belonged to

Lois. And the other, the lean ascetic rectangle of a face, that was owned by Father Carteret.

Harker said, "I guess it worked. Where am I?" His voice was hoarse and rusty-sounding, like a musical instrument long neglected.

Mart Raymond said, "It worked beautifully. You're in Newark General Hospital. You've been here in anesthetic coma for two weeks. Ever since the operation."

Two weeks, Harker thought. It seemed like two minutes ago that Vogel had lowered the anesthesia cone over his face.

"How—did things work out?" he asked.

It was the priest who spoke. "Perfectly, Jim. You're a national hero."

He glanced at Lois, who bent over Harker and clutched his hand. Hers seemed cold, Harker thought.

They left him after a while, and he lay back in the bed, thinking that it was good to be alive again. The sunlight was bright and warm in the room; it should be nearly August, he thought.

Some time later he was fed, and some time after that a nurse appeared bearing a thick stack of newspapers. "The *Times* since your operation, Mr. Harker. Your wife thought you'd like to see them."

He thanked her and reached hungrily for the topmost paper. It was today's—the latest edition. The banner headline was, HARKER OUT OF COMA, and they had the picture of him that had been used for his campaign posters back in 2028.

He leafed back . . . . July 30, July 29, July 28 . . .

At the bottom of the heap was the July 16 paper, with the account of his sensational submission to death. They described the event in detail: how, cheerful to the last, he had been wheeled into the operating room, anesthetized, killed. The operating room had then been cleared of all but the surgeons, who proceeded with the cardiac operation according to the papers. When the "operation" had been "successfully concluded," an hour later, the observers were called back. Thirty-eight people had watched his untroubled return to life.

He thumbed on through the papers. The suit of Klaus and Mitchison against Beller Laboratories had been thrown out of court on the 18th. The next day, the FBI had repeated its earlier statement exonerating the labs of any guilt in the matter of the death of Wayne Janson, and this time there was no further statement from Jonathan Bryant.

There were statements from various ranking government officials, though. They unanimously favored setting up a federal re-

search grant project for studying further applications of the techniques of reanimation.

The nurse appeared and said, "Mr. Raymond would like to see you, sir."

"Send him in."

Raymond grinned and remarked, "You look like you've been getting up to date."

"I have been. Things look pretty good, don't they?"

"They look tremendous," Raymond said. "Dixon phoned from Washington to say that Vorys and Brewster have been won over. The Committee's recommending a multi-million dollar federal grant to us for continuing research."

"Great! Now I suppose you can lick the business of insanity, Mart."

Raymond grinned cheerfully again. "Didn't I tell you? We broke through that wall about four days ago. It's a matter of insulating the hormone feed lines. Yours was the last risky reanimation."

Before Harker could reply, the phone by the side of his bed chimed briefly. He picked it up and heard a voice say, "Albany calling for Mr. James Harker."

"That's me," Harker said.

"Go ahead, Albany."

There was a pause; then a new voice said, "Jim? Leo Winstead here. Just heard the news. Everything all right?"

"Couldn't be okayer, Leo."

Winstead coughed. "Jim, maybe this is too soon to ask you to think about returning to work, but I want to put a proposition to you."

"What kind?"

"New York State is short one senator right now. I have to appoint somebody to replace Thurman. And it seemed to me that *you*—"

Harker nearly let the phone drop. When he had recovered his poise he said, "I'm still a sick man, Leo. Don't shock me like that."

"Sorry if I did. But it's a job I think you're equipped to handle. Interested?"

"I sort of think I am," Harker said wryly.

When he had finished talking to Winstead, he hung up the phone and looked at Mart Raymond. "That was Governor Winstead. He's naming me to the Senate to fill the rest of Thurman's term."

"Wonderful!"

"I suppose it is," Harker admitted.

He sent for Lois and told her about it, and she wept a little, partly for joy and partly, he suspected, because she did not want him to take on any new responsibilities.

Harker flicked the tears away. He stretched gently, mindful of his sutures.

Lois said, "It's all finished, isn't it? The struggling and the conniving, the plotting and scheming? Everything's going to be all right now."

He smiled at her. He was thinking that the stream of events could have come out much worse. He had taken a desperate gamble, and he and humanity both were that much the richer for it.

But the world as he had known it for forty-odd years was dead, and would not return to life. This was a new era—an era in which the darkest fact of existence, death, no longer loomed high over man.

Staggering tasks awaited mankind now. A new code of laws was needed, a new ethical system. The first chapter had closed, but the rest of the book remained to be written.

He squeezed her hand tightly. "No, Lois. It *isn't* all finished. The hardest part of the job is just beginning. But everything's going to be all right, now. Yes. Everything's going to be all right."

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TALES FOR TOMORROW

The next issue—first to be published on our long-awaited monthly schedule—will bring you a refreshing mixture of stories by old and new writers. Big names or newcomers, though, they all have one thing in common: something worthwhile to say, and a highly entertaining way of saying it.

Calvin Knox leads off with *The Silent Invaders,* a short novel of galactic intrigue with no shortage of action. But interwoven with the action is a provocative problem in ethics of interstellar politics, one that the hero has to solve, and one that will keep you guessing. Newcomer John Silletto contributes *Fairyland Planet,* which deals with child-raising, including such matters as the vital necessity of making a child believe in Santa Claus, even though the child in question is 38 years old. . . . Short stories already definitely scheduled are by men you know well and repeatedly ask for in your letters—Algis Budrys and A. Bertram Chandler—and a couple of bright new stars named Thomas Purdom and David C. Hodgkins, who will be on a lot of lists of favorite authors from here on out. All in all, it'll be an issue packed with variety, high entertainment, and stimulating speculation, and one that will make you as happy as we are that INFINITY is monthly at last.

Beauty Interrupted

The Earthmen were selfish; they obviously wanted to hold the people of Orcti back. But no planet has a monopoly on science—or the ability to spy!

By CHARLES L. FONTENAY

BIRKALA looked through the iron fence and his eyes were yellow with envy and a kind of hatred. The Earthman, Erik, was in the garden, painting on a large canvas and chatting amiably with Spira, Birkala's sister.

"The Earthmen have everything and they give us nothing," said Birkala to his companion, Direka.

Direka nodded and grinned stupidly. Direka was simple in the head, and he always agreed with everything Birkala said. Direka was hunchbacked, also, and it pleased Birkala to compare his own straight, youthful body to the crooked form of Direka. Altogether, Direka was a most satisfactory companion.

"The Earthmen live for centu-

Illustrated by ED EMSH

ries, but our life-span is that of a mayfly, and they do nothing about it," said Birkala bitterly. "The Earthmen flash from world to world in an instant, but we must use antiquated rockets and be confined to our own system of planets."

Direka nodded again.

"The Earthmen are greedy," he agreed sagely.

"I am going to talk with the Earthmen," said Birkala, and added cruelly: "You must leave me, Direka. Your crooked body would hurt the Earthmen's sensitive eyes."

"Yes, I shall go so you may talk with the Earthman," assented Direka and moved away sadly down the street.

Birkala watched him go, and smiled ruefully. He did not really like to hurt Direka, but if he made Direka think the Earthman was repelled at the sight of him, perhaps Direka would engender his own hatred of Erik, instead of merely echoing Birkala's emotions.

Birkala stepped to the open gate and entered the garden. It was a more beautiful garden than even the greatest artists of the world Orcti could arrange, for into Erik's planning had gone the aesthetic tradition of many millennia. The green sun that swam in Orcti's violet sky shone down on foliage and grasses of orange and brown and rust, and so carefully were things placed that even the great silver-and-blue lina flowers did not blare their supremacy over lesser plants, as in most Orcti gardens. They blended with the statuary and foliage, with the walks and the pools, tamely contributing their beauty to the balanced picture of peace and quietude.

ERIK looked up from his easel as Birkala approached. He was a blond man of noble face and bearing, looking to be Birkala's own age. Yet this Earthman had lived and traveled the stars before Birkala's great grandfather was conceived in the womb.

Spira sat nude on the edge of a fountain pool, one knee bent and one hand dipped gracefully in the sparkling water. She sat patiently and kept her wide golden eyes fixed on Erik's face, but recognized Birkala's approach with a faint smile. The sunlight glinted from her yellow-green hair and burnt orange skin.

Birkala stood at Erik's shoulder, his feet apart and his hands clasped behind him, and studied the unfinished painting critically. With a sure, light brush, Erik had captured the innocence of a young woman seated by a fountain. The style was so simple as to be almost calligraphic, yet a few lines and spots of paint portrayed to the eye the long curve of Spira's thigh, the tilt of her breasts, the candor and loveliness of her face.

Birkala's eyes dropped from the canvas to Erik's seated figure, and his expression altered from unwilling admiration to defiant scorn. The Earthman's short-sleeved smock was agape and exposed Erik's perfectly muscled body to the warm sunshine.

"Why are Earthmen so obsessed with nudity?" demanded Birkala. Birkala himself wore loose trousers, shiny boots with curled toes, a shirt with flowing sleeves, a scarf about his throat. Beneath this was under-clothing.

"We are not obsessed with nudity, Birkala," replied Erik gently. "The human body is natural and it is beautiful. We see nothing shameful about it, and we wear clothing only when needed for protection against the elements."

"That is all right for you to say. It would be all right for me to believe. But can you say a hunched body like Direka's is beautiful?"

"Not to unsympathetic eyes, perhaps. Poor Direka! But there will be a day when on Orcti, as on Earth, no one is born with a deformed body."

Birkala sat down on a rock, crushing a bunch of purple minita flowers beside it.

"Always in the future," he said bitterly. "Always promises, in the dim, distant future. You Earthmen know many things and have many things that you promise us, but why must these promises always be for our grandchildren's grandchildren?"

"We found you in mud huts, and now you live in clean cities," reproved Erik, beginning to wipe his brushes clean. "We found you driving oxen, and now you ride spaceships to the other planets of your system."

"Your lives are centuries long, and ours are three-score and ten," countered Birkala. "It is true we have spaceships, but you step into a beam transmitter and cross the galaxy in seconds."

"That is because you are not ready," replied Erik mildly.

Birkala sat silent, his anger building up in him. Spira, seeing that Erik was finished with painting for the moment, arose in a graceful flow of motion and came to them. She stood beside Erik, one hand on his shoulder, and studied the canvas without speaking.

"You're the only Earthman on all Orcti," Birkala began again. "Since I was a child I've heard of Erik, the Earthman who lives in the garden in the heart of the city. Since I was a child I've heard that Erik, the Earthman, watches over us like a noble god. Why do you really stay on Orcti, Erik? To prevent us from progressing too swiftly and challenging the position of Earth?"

"Why do you carp at Erik?" demanded Spira, and there was a note of anger to her soft voice.

"Erik has always been a friend to us, Birkala."

"Ah, yes, and especially a friend to pretty little Spira," replied Birkala with deep irony. "She is my sister, Erik. Should I be honored that the great Earthman takes my sister as a mistress?"

Spira flushed, for the term "mistress" was not a respectable one on Orcti.

"I love Spira, like a daughter and a wife at once," said Erik. "I think you know that, Birkala. No one was happier than you when she came to me. I do not marry her because I am forbidden to be bound by the laws of Orcti, but I shall cherish her all of her life."

"Yes. I know the schedule. And then another young woman shall grace the garden of the always-young Earthman. How nice for the Earthman!"

"Why are you so savage today, Birkala?" asked Spira, genuinely puzzled. "I know that you have been restless for a long time, but we knew as children that other women had been in my place long before I was born."

"Birkala is angry because he is a good scientist," explained Erik with an understanding smile. "Birkala thought yesterday that he had discovered the principle on which the beam transmitter is based, and I showed him that his theory is wrong. He is angry with himself for having been mistaken."

Birkala spat into the fountain.

"I am not so sure I was wrong," he retorted. "I think it could be that you tried to direct me away from my theory because you don't want me to find the truth."

He turned and strode from the garden, frowning, his face hot.

Turning right from the garden gate along the street, he passed in front of Erik's house, which was flush with the sidewalk. As he did so, he was surprised to see the door ajar and Direka sitting in it.

Direka evidently had been waiting for Birkala to appear. He rose quickly, almost stumbling down the steps, and gestured eagerly at Birkala.

"Come quickly, Birkala!" he chattered. "I have found a way into the part of the Earthman's house which is forbidden!"

BIRKALA hesitated, then followed the crooked little man into Erik's house.

Erik kept his house open. It was never locked, and Birkala had never heard that anyone had had the temerity to try to rob or harm the mysterious Earthman. Anyone could walk in or out, but few did without invitations, for the people of Orcti held Erik in awe.

But the rear portion of the house was without windows or doors. It was not too apparent

from the outside, but Birkala had been in Erik's house many times and had discovered long ago that there was a large section of it closed and inaccessible.

As fast as his short legs could move, Direka led Birkala through the simply furnished house. Birkala followed easily, and smiled. Direka was like a monkey: he was not bright, but he was clever and eager.

In Erik's bedroom, Direka stopped, panting, and pointed triumphantly at the rear wall. There was a great crack in it, near Erik's bed. A section of the wall was a secret door, and it had been left ajar.

"Good fortune!" breathed Birkala, his eyes sparkling. "I have wondered for a long time what was behind that wall."

He pushed the door wider and went through the opening, Direka crowding at his heels. It was very dark, the only light coming through the crack from the bedroom. Birkala could see nothing.

He felt about the walls for a switch, without success.

"I wonder how one turns on the light in here?" he said to Direka.

At the word "light," light sprang into being all around them. It was a soft, indirect illumination which appeared to have no source and cast no shadow.

They were in a sort of corridor which paralleled the wall through which they had just come. On the opposite wall of this hallway were banks of dials and charts and switches, and in the center of this opposite wall was an open doorway.

Cautiously, Birkala and Direka moved down the corridor and peered through the open door. It gave entrance to a square room, which was lighted with the same sort of illumination as the hall.

There was nothing in the room. There were just four walls, a ceiling and a floor. There was no furniture. There were no windows and there was no other door.

"A strange thing!" muttered Birkala. "Erik does not retire to this place, for he is always around the house. I have walked into his bedroom and found him asleep. What is the purpose of this room?"

"Perhaps a dungeon," darkly suggested Direka, who was a devotee of adventure pictures at the theaters.

Birkala backed away from the door and studied the array of dials and switches. As Erik had said, Birkala was a good scientist. Birkala was thoroughly familiar with the nervous and intestinal workings of spaceships. He had made several trips to other planets in Orcti's system, and had made several contributions of his own to the science of rocketry and astrogation.

He whistled softly between his teeth.

"We've found it, Direka!" he exclaimed to his companion. "This is the beam transmitter that Erik has kept hidden so carefully. This is the control panel, and the room undoubtedly is the transmitter itself."

Direka looked puzzled, then brightened.

"Now we can go to Earth? Yes, Birkala?" he chirped.

BIRKALA inspected the control panel carefully. The charts were star-charts, etched on metal under glass. Below each was a series of dials, and Birkala deduced that these dials set the coordinates on the charts, establishing the destination. He recognized the configurations of the heavens from Orcti.

"Yes, Direka, I think we could," he said. "But then the Earthmen would know we had been meddling. If we should go, we should go here, I think."

He stabbed a finger at one of the charts, at a star on the outer edge of the inhabited portion of the galaxy.

"The inhabited planet in this system is no more advanced than Orcti," he said. "If I could go there, I could perhaps evade discovery by the Earthman there. But we certainly shall not risk going anywhere until I learn more about the operation of this machine."

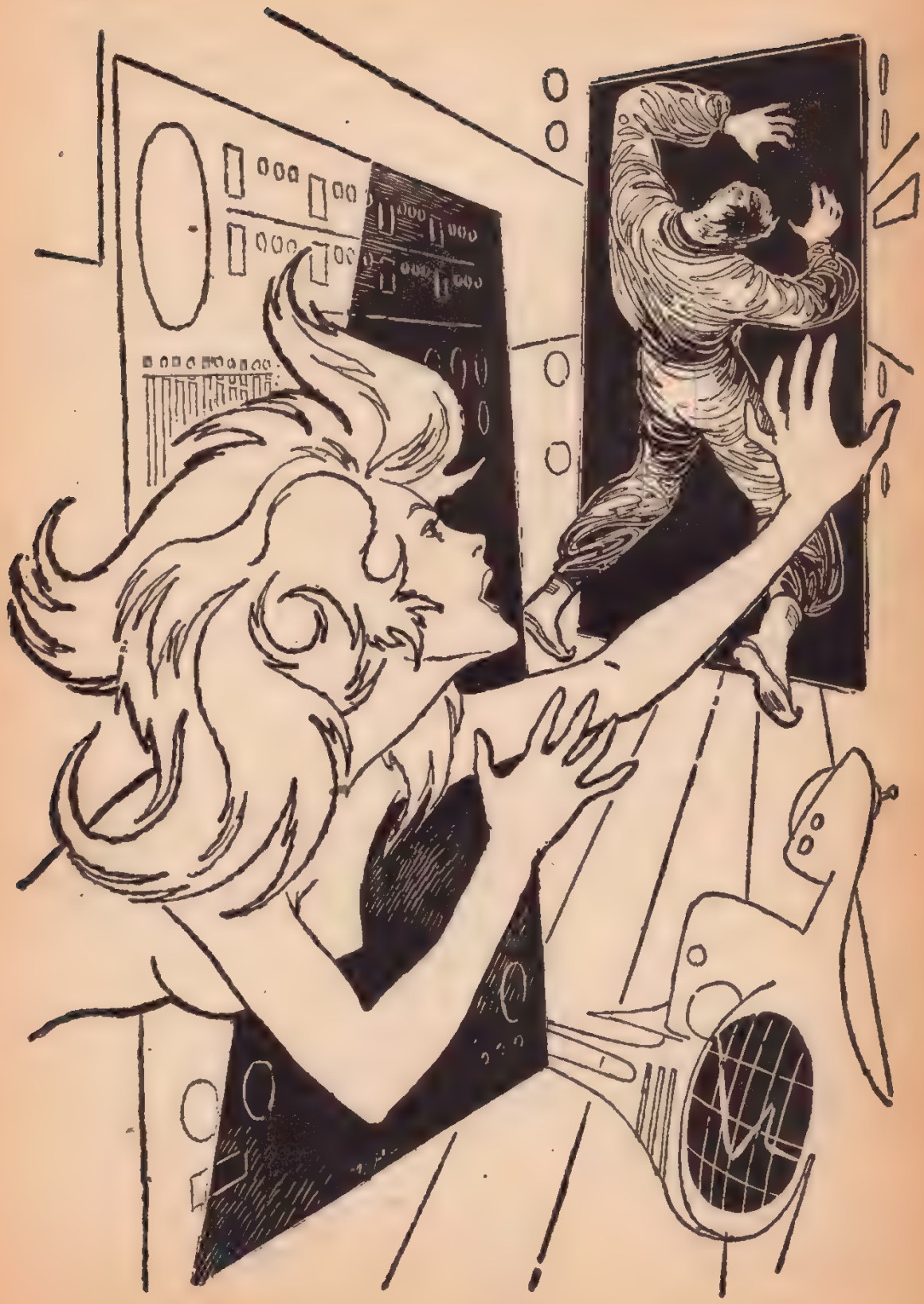
Birkala was too good a scientist not to realize that grave danger was involved in tinkering with an unfamiliar machine. But he was too ardent a scientist and his obsession with the beam transmitter was too strong for him not to risk danger to himself willingly.

"Direka, you go out into the house, and if you see either Erik or Spira approaching, warn me quickly," he commanded. "I must study this machine."

Direka slipped out through the opening, and Birkala turned back to the control panel. As experienced as he was with machinery and technical matters, he nevertheless expected to be baffled by this product of Earth's advanced science.

But the controls were surprisingly simple. There were the destination coordinates, and Birkala was able to read enough of the square, blocky Earth writing to discern the designations for *off* and *on* beside what was apparently the control lever. There were some power—or volume—or perhaps distance—controls about which he was not sure; the best thing to do about them was not to touch them.

There were no controls in the room itself, so Birkala deduced that one set the coordinates for one's destination, switched on the machine and then walked into the room. The room probably acted as both sender and receiver, and



after a time lapse the sending apparatus perhaps switched off automatically so that the room could receive again.

He pushed aside the chill, disturbing speculation about the controls of unknown purpose. He set the coordinates firmly for the star system Denragi, and pushed the switch to the *on* position.

At first Birkala thought the power source to the machine must be disconnected. There was no throbbing, no hum, no indication that it had been activated. Yes, there was one: a bright red spark showed square on the destination he had set by the coordinates. Denragi shone of its own light on the control panel.

Encouraged, he stepped to the door of the empty room.

Birkala recoiled, appalled.

He could not see into the room. The luminescence was gone. The room was absolutely dark.

Yet the darkness was more than the absence of light. It was more, even, than the utter jet-blackness of intergalactic space. It was an active blackness, a *presence* of blackness, and it filled the room to the very edge of the door, untouched by the normal light from the hallway.

The most frightening thing about it was that he felt an impulse to move into the room, a strong pull into the room, into the blackness. As he instinctively resisted, the pull grew stronger.

And then Birkala was terrified. For the pull was so strong that he could not step back away from the yawning door.

In a semi-daze, he fought with his mind, for the force was not a physical one. He fought, and he felt his control slipping.

There came a commotion from the bedroom behind him, the sound of upraised voices. There was Direka's agonized chatter, a shrill protest, and the firm angry voice of a woman.

He was able to turn his head slightly to see Spira come through the opening into the hallway.

Birkala could not speak. He tried to warn Spira back with his strained, stinging eyes. But, unclothed as she had been at the fountain, she walked purposefully to him.

"Birkala, you know Erik does not wish you tampering with these forbidden things!" she chided, and laid a restraining hand on his shoulder.

At her touch, the powerful attractive force drained from Birkala in a rush. Released, he staggered back and fell against the opposite wall of the corridor.

But Spira was yanked into the black room like a filing to a magnet, and vanished utterly.

WHEN Spira left him to go into the house, Erik sat for a few moments, studying his unfinished canvas critically. Now, an arc of

pure orange there, a trace of subdued green there . . .

A disturbing current intruded from the outer fringes of his mind, that still undeveloped realm of precognition. There was something . . . something was to happen . . . to Spira!

He rose in haste, and strode swiftly into the house.

He encountered the hunchback sneaking from the direction of the bedroom. At sight of him, Direka broke into an awkward trot toward the front door. There was something in his face that made Erik speed his steps.

The hidden panel to the back of the house was open. Erik burst through it.

The transmitter was on, and its electrical aura hovered ominously around the door of the transmission room. In the hallway across from that door, Birkala was struggling to his feet.

Erik seized Birkala in time to prevent him from hurling himself into the blackness of the activated room.

"Spira!" gasped Birkala. "She was pulled in there!"

With the strength of a giant, Erik hurled Birkala the length of the corridor.

"Get out!" he roared. "Quickly!"

Erik plunged into the holocaust of hostile blackness.

The room was endless, infinite. It was all space and all beyond space, and there was no light there for human eyes to see.

There was an alien presence in this nothingness, a vampire presence that clutched a pathetic, limp figure light-years away, and reached out toward Erik with its hungry essence.

Erik stood straight in the midst of nothing, his head thrown back, his yellow hair lifting on the wind that blows between the galaxies. The questing essence touched him and explored him, blindly unaware of humanity's challenge to its elemental insistence.

Erik let his mind expand beyond him in a flexing of sure strength. Erik forced his mind from him in a blaze of anger. Erik attacked with his mind, magnificent in its unchained and immeasurable power.

The alien force receded, it dwindled, it diminished. It melted before the strength of Erik's mind, that was a burning, pulsating power like light, and yet was not light. The vampire essence slowly, reluctantly, relinquished its distant, doll-like victim and retired in pain beyond the edges of the galaxies.

In a room that was a room once more, in a room that was yet dark but lighted to him by the cold fire of his brain, Erik strode to a corner and lifted the crumpled, unconscious figure of Spira in his arms. Carrying her tenderly, he left the terrible room.

THE CORRIDOR was empty. Birkala was no longer there.

Erik pulled down the control switch, and the blackness that had sprung up behind him in the transmission room faded into the harmless air of Orcti.

Bearing Spira, Erik strode through the house and out into the garden.

Birkala was pacing back and forth near the easel, his face working in his agitation. Erik approached him, and laid Spira gently on the soft grass before him. She lay still, the rise and fall of her breasts the only indication that she lived.

"Is she all right?" choked Birkala, kneeling at her side in an agony of remorse.

"She is not harmed physically," said Erik, and Birkala gasped with relief. Erik added: "But you must see the rest of your answer."

He leaned over her and called softly:

"Spira!"

As though awakening from a spell, Spira opened her golden eyes. They fixed themselves on Erik's sorrowful face, and they widened. She smiled.

But, with growing horror, Birkala realized it was not the smile of Spira, the sister of his childhood. It carried no message of recognition nor of intelligence. It was the pitiful smile of mindlessness.

She gurgled.

Erik helped her to sit up, and she stared about her wonderingly.

"You have looked on me as an alien, Birkala," he said sternly, "but we are of the same humanity. The mother of your race, too, was Earth. But while the far-flung children of Earth had to start as pioneers to build the cultures of their varied worlds, the men of Earth forged ahead through the millennia in their climb toward whatever estate may one day be the goal of mankind.

"We of Earth who come to your worlds are watchers to help you avoid some of the pitfalls we know may divert you from that same path we have trod, and destroy you. When you think of me as a man, Birkala, you think of me as one who knows the secret of long life and has a physical science in advance of your own. But the difference is far more: there are thresholds beyond the physical which you cannot comprehend, and beyond these thresholds the man of Earth has gone and explored and moves ever outward."

"I know this must be true," murmured Birkala brokenly, stroking his sister's yellow-green hair. "I wronged you, Erik."

"No, you wronged yourself, Birkala, and your people. Because you stand at the pinnacle of your own science, you thought you could step forward into ours. Because the words 'beam transmit-

ter' signify technology to you, you would not understand that no physical means of transportation could transcend the limiting speed of light. You could not understand that this thing called, in your language, a beam transmitter, reaches out into unguessed dimensions.

"Birkala, the reason Earth has not given you the beam transmitter is not that it is beyond your technological capabilities. It is that you have not developed in mind and heart to the point where you can cope with the awful perils of those dimensions, dangers that even we do not understand fully. As the people of Orcti are impelled to cover their bodies with clothing, so are they incapable of facing such things with their naked minds. You could have destroyed your entire world, instead of just your sister."

There were tears in Birkala's eyes.

"And is she, then, destroyed?" he asked in a low voice.

"She must go home with you," said Erik. "I cannot help her. Slowly she may recover some of her own personality, and years from now she may be again part of the woman she was. But Spira is the price you have paid for your temerity, and she will always be there to remind you of that."

Shaking his head, Birkala arose and urged the girl to her feet. Erik helped him dress her in the clothing she had worn when she came to the garden, the saucy skirt and shirt of the women of Orcti. Taking her by the hand, Birkala started to lead her carefully away.

"Wait, Birkala," said Erik.

He took the canvas from his easel and handed it to Birkala.

"It is yours and you must keep it," he said sadly. "It is like Spira. It is beauty interrupted before it could fulfill its promise."

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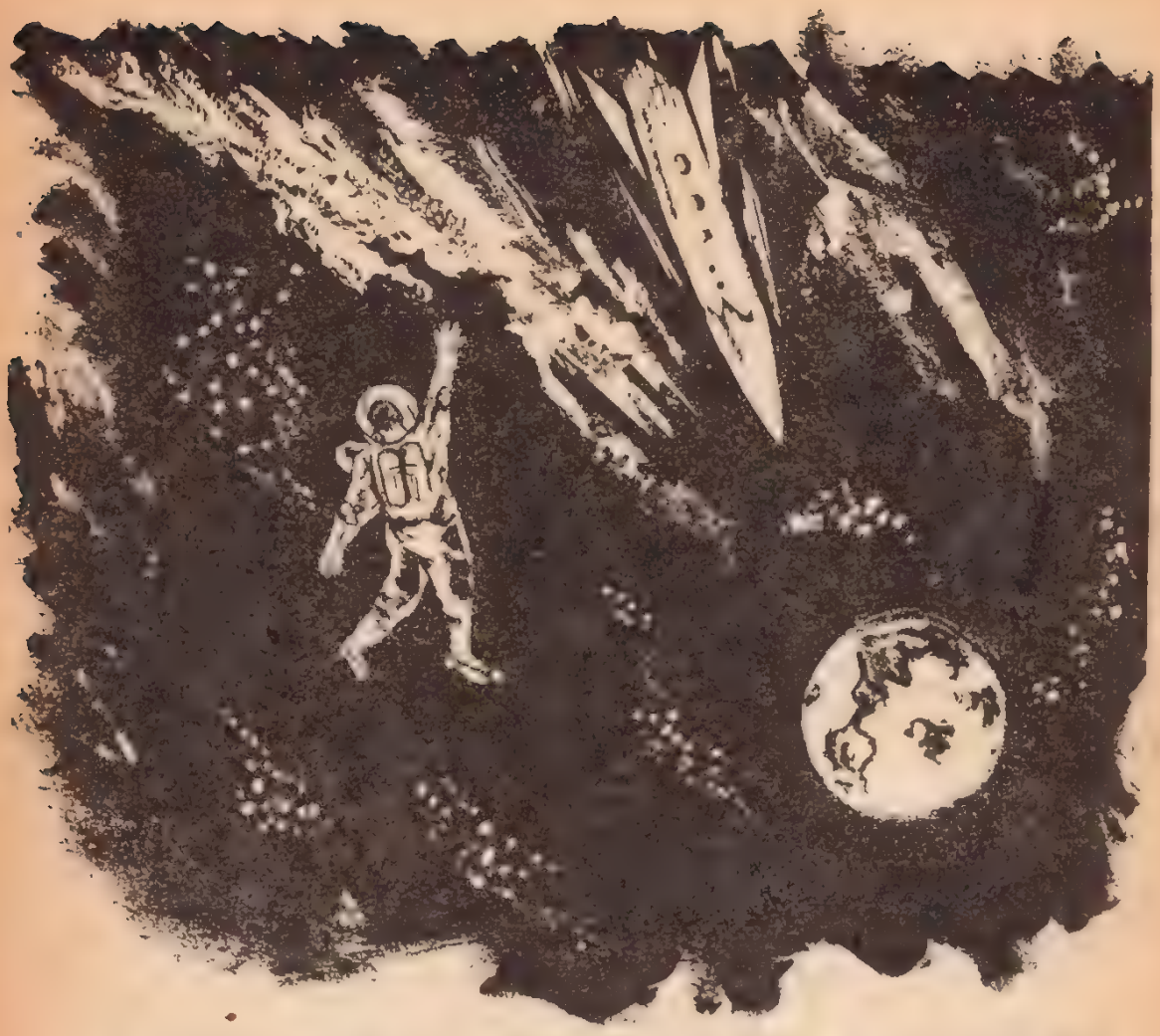
SOLACON!

The Solacon—otherwise the Sixteenth World Science Fiction Convention (combined with the 11th Annual Westercon)—will be held at the Hotel Alexandria in Los Angeles, California, over the Labor Day week-end, and everybody who is anybody in science fiction will be there. Richard Matheson has been selected as the guest of honor, and the program is shaping up nicely. To get all the facts, join the World Science Fiction Society, Inc., by sending a dollar to Treasurer Rick Sneary, 2962 Santa Ana Street, South Gate, California. You'll never be sorry!



AND MILES TO GO

By WILLIAM F. NOLAN

ALONE within the humming ship, deep in its honeycombed metal chambers, Murdock waited for death. While the rocket moved inexorably toward Earth—an immense silver needle threading the dark fabric of space—he waited calmly through the final hours, knowing that the verdict was absolute, that hope no longer existed.

Electronically self-sufficient, the ship was doing its job perfectly, the job it had been built to do. After twenty years in space, the ship was taking Robert Murdock home.

Home. Earth. Thayerville, a small town in Kansas. Clean air, a shaded street, and a white, two-

He knew, to the exact minute, when he was going to die. And Earth was too far away to reach . . .

BEFORE I SLEEP

Illustrated by RICHARD KLUGA

story house at the end of the block. Home—after two decades among the stars.

Sitting quietly before the round port, seeing and not seeing the endless darkness surrounding him, Murdock was remembering.

He remembered the worried face of his mother, her whispered prayers for his safety as he mounted the rocket ramp those twenty years ago; he could still feel the final, crushing handshake of his father moments before the outer airlock slid closed. His mother had been 55 then, his father 63. It was almost impossible to believe that they were now old and white-haired.

And what of himself?

He was now 41, and space had weathered him as the plains of Kansas had weathered his father. He, too, had labored as his father had labored—but on strange, alien worlds, under suns far hotter than Sol. Murdock's face was square and hard-featured, his eyes dark and deep under thrusting ledges of bone. He had changed as they had changed.

He was a stranger going home to strangers.

Carefully, Murdock unfolded his mother's last letter, written in her flowery, archaic hand, and received just before Earth takeoff.

Dearest Bob,

Oh, we are so excited! Your father and I listened to your voice on the tape over and over, telling us that you are coming home to us at last. We are both so eager to see you, son. As you know, we have not been too well of late. Your father's heart does not allow him out much any more, and I have had a few fainting spells over the past month. But Doctor Thom says that we are all right, and you are not *to worry. Just hurry home to us, Bob. We both pray God you will come back safely.*

All our love,

Mother

Robert Murdock put the letter aside and clenched his fists. Only brief hours remained to him, and the small Kansas town of Thayerville was an impossible distance across space. He knew he would never reach it alive.

The lines of an ancient poem by Robert Frost whispered through his mind:

But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep . . .

He had promised his parents that he would come home—and he meant to keep that promise.

The doctors had shown him that it was impossible. They had charted his death; they had told him when his heart would stop beating, when his breathing would cease. Death, for Robert Murdock, was a certainty. His alien disease was incurable.

But they had listened to his plan. They had listened, and agreed.

Now, with less than a half-hour of life remaining, Murdock was walking down one of the ship's long corridors, his boot-heels ringing on the narrow metal walkway.

He was ready, at last, to keep his promise.

Murdock paused before a wall storage locker, twisted a small dial. A door slid smoothly back. He looked up at the tall man standing motionless in the darkness. Reaching forward, Murdock made a quick adjustment.

The tall man stepped down into the corridor, and the light

flashed in his deep-set eyes, almost hidden behind thrusting ledges of bone. The man's face was hard and square-featured.

"My name is Robert Murdock," said the tall figure in the neat patrol uniform. "I am 41 years of age, a rocket pilot going home to Earth." He paused. "And I am sound of mind and body."

Murdock nodded slowly. "Indeed you are," he said.

"How much longer do you have, sir?"

"Another ten minutes. Perhaps a few second beyond that," replied Murdock.

"I—I'm sorry," said the tall figure.

Murdock smiled. He knew that a machine, however perfect, could not experience the emotion of sorrow, but it eased him to hear the words.

You will be fine, he thought. You will serve well in my place and my parents will never suspect that their son has not come home to them.

"It must all be perfect," said Murdock.

"Of course," said the machine. "When the month I am to spend with them is over they'll see me board a rocket for space—and they'll understand that I cannot return to them for another twenty years. They will accept the fact that a spaceman must return to the stars, that he cannot leave the service before he is 60. Let me assure you, sir, it will all go well."

Yes, Murdock told himself, it *will* go well; every detail has been considered. My voice is his voice, my habits his own. The tapes I have pre-recorded will continue to reach them at specified intervals until their death. They will never know I'm gone.

"Are you ready now, sir?" the tall figure asked gently.

Murdock drew in his breath. "Yes," he said, "I'm ready now."

And they began to walk down the long corridor.

MURDOCK remembered how proud his parents had been when he was finally accepted for Space Training—the only boy in Thayerville to be chosen. But then, it was only right that he should have been the one. The other boys, those who failed, had not *lived* the dream as he had lived it. From the moment he'd watched the first moon rocket land he had known, beyond any possible doubt, that he would become a rocketman. He had stood there, in that cold December of 1980, a boy of 12, watching the great rocket fire down from space, watching it thaw and blacken the frozen earth. He had known that he would one day follow it back to the stars, to vast and alien horizons, to worlds past imagining.

He remembered his last night on Earth, twenty long years ago, when he had felt the pressing immensity of the vast and terrible universe surrounding him as he lay in his bed. He remembered the sleepless hours before dawn, when he could feel the tension building within the single room, within himself lying there in the heated stillness of the small, white house. He remembered the rain, near morning, drumming the roof, and the thunder roaring powerfully across the Kansas sky. And then, somehow, the thunder's roar blended into the deep atomic roar of a rocket, carrying him away from Earth, away to the burning stars . . . away . . .

Away.

THE TALL FIGURE in the neat patrol uniform closed the outer airlock and watched the body drift into blackness. The ship and the android were one; two complex and perfect machines doing their job. For Robert Murdock, the journey was over, the long miles had come to an end.

Now he would sleep forever in space.

WHEN the rocket landed, the crowds were there, waving and shouting out Murdock's name as he appeared on the silver ramp. He smiled and raised his hand in salute, standing there tall in the sun, his splendid dress uniform reflecting the light in a thousand glittering patterns.

At the far end of the ramp two figures waited, An old man, bowed and trembling over a cane, and a seamed and wrinkled woman, her hair blowing white, her eyes shining.

When the tall spaceman reached them they embraced him feverishly, clinging tight to his arms.

Their son had returned. Robert Murdock had come home from space.

"WELL," said a man at the fringe of the crowd, "there they go."

His companion sighed and shook his head. "I *still* don't think it's right somehow. It just doesn't seem right to me."

"It's what they wanted, isn't it?" asked the other. "It's what they wrote in their wills. They vowed their son would never come home to death. In another month he'll be gone anyway. Back for another twenty years. Why ruin it all for him?" The man paused, shading his eyes against the sun. "And they *are* perfect, aren't they? He'll never know."

"I suppose you're right," nodded the second man. "He'll never know."

And he watched the old man and the old woman and the tall son until they were out of sight.

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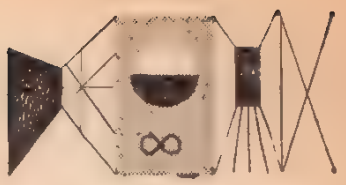
Infinity's Choice



by ROBERT SILVERBERG

DAMON KNIGHT *has accepted a position as editor of another magazine, and his new duties will prevent him from continuing to write this department. We have selected* ROBERT SILVERBERG *to replace him at this far from easy job. In the comparatively few years since he has become a professional writer, Bob has sold more fiction than some authors do in their entire lifetimes, he is an expert in the matter of what makes a story tick, and he displays unfailing good taste. He promises to pull no punches in his reviews, and to remember to make them entertaining as well as informative. We predict it won't be long before he'll be challenging science fiction's other reviewers for top spot!—LTS*

∞

THE SEEDLING STARS, by James Blish. Gnome Press, $3.00.

Out of five independent short stories and novelets, James Blish has woven a fascinating portrait of Man's interstellar colonization via pantropy: that is, by adapting Man to fit other worlds rather than by adapting the other worlds to fit Man.

The idea is not new, but no other author has pursued it with so much ingenuity, genuine scientific knowledge, and keen vigor. Blish is an arch-exponent of *science* fiction; when he puts forth an idea he backs it up with solidly researched scientific thinking, never permitting himself the easier path of using magical devices to make his plots work.

In this case it is genetic alteration of the human form that interests him. In the first of the four sections of *The Seedling Stars*, he tells of a colony of adapted men living and breathing on Ganymede, in the story that appeared under the title "A Time to Survive" in *Fantasy & Science Fiction* several years ago. This opening sequence, a short novel in itself, not only sets forth the background against which the pantropy project originated, but richly sketches a world of the near future, dramatizes an inter-

esting though occasionally mechanical story of character development, and creates in enviable detail the aspects of life on Ganymede. The section is the most recently written of the four, and the writing shows Blish at his best: lively, concise, crisp.

The second sequence appeared in *If* in 1954 as "The Thing in the Attic." Told from the viewpoint of adapted men living in a treeborne world on a tropical planet, it demonstrates pantropy in action; and though it is a minor episode in the pattern, it is not without warmth and humor as well as lovingly woven background work.

Next comes what is undoubtedly the high point: "Surface Tension," which is composed partly of Blish's 1942 story "Sunken Universe" *(Super Science Stories)* and his *Galaxy* novelet, "Surface Tension," published in 1952. The heroes here are microscopic humans on a watery world; they struggle against their protozoan enemies, ally themselves with paramecia, and—in a weirdly brilliant episode—venture out into "space" in their two-inch-long spaceship.

And finally comes "Watershed," from *If* circa 1955: a short story set in a distant future when pantropy has seeded the universe with altered Earthmen. Slim in itself, it provides an ironic postscript to the book.

This is *real* science fiction: the unadulterated article, stimulating and thoughtful. With each successive book, James Blish makes more solid his claim to the top level of the field.

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THE SURVIVORS, by Tom Godwin. Gnome Press, $3.00.

The first full-length novel by Tom Godwin, author of the classic novelet "The Cold Equations," is a good one indeed. Godwin has expanded last year's *Venture SF* story, "Too Soon to Die," into a powerful and exciting novel.

Eight thousand Earthmen are aboard the spaceliner *Constellation* bound for a colony-world when the giant ship is captured by the Gerns, aliens who have declared war on Earth. Half the Earthmen are taken by the Gerns as factory workers; the remaining four thousand are cast down on the nearest Earth-type planet, Ragnarok, and left to their own devices.

What follows is the story of the Ragnarok castaways, in chronicle style covering two hundred years. Ragnarok is a planet of a double star, and its eccentric orbit provides generation-long winters and equally long summers, both of furious intensity. The gravity is 1.5; the planet is virtually without metals, and is roamed by two hostile life-forms,

the wolflike and intelligent Prowlers and the elephantine Unicorns.

Against these odds, the *Constellation* group survives, its numbers thinned from four thousand to less than a hundred by the untender mercies of Ragnarok life. Bound together by the common goal of vengeance, the colony clings to life, expands, and eventually attains its goal in a lively climax.

Only the fact that its characters are utterly flat keeps this book from attaining the highest ranks. The people in *The Survivors* are mere puppets going through their paces—but the book's real interest is in Ragnarok and its challenges, and these Godwin handles superbly, with the same tough-minded realism that has distinguished much of his magazine work. *The Survivors* is carefully written, with occasional moments of emotional poignancy and a never-ending sweep of action. It's an excellent job.

Incidentally, despite the $3.00 price-tags, this and the above-mentioned Blish book are available at half price through Marty Greenberg's "Pick-a-Book" plan.

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THE GRAVEYARD READER, edited by Groff Conklin. Ballantine Books, 35¢.

Some sociologist in search of a thesis might care to investigate the reasons behind the abrupt and severe circulation decline suffered by nearly every science fiction magazine just about the time the sputniks burst into the headlines. In October, the magazine publishers were smiling smugly and making plans for expansion; by December they were staring bewilderedly at circulation charts and wondering what had happened.

Simultaneous with the decline in sf sales came an equally startling rise of interest in weird and fantastic fiction, long thought commercially kaput. New magazines of the gruesome are planned, old ones are thriving, and now Ballantine has published its first horror title—an anthology of twelve stories compiled by Groff Conklin.

Perhaps the newspapers are supplying enough space travel information to keep readers more than replete; perhaps the very real presence of satellites in the sky has caused a sudden fear of science, deep and unadmitted, which drives people from our transistor-and-hyperspace kind of fiction toward the older irrational and fantastic sort. Whatever the reason, it has led Ballantine, a bastion of sf, to issue a book subtitled "Twelve Terrifying Tales."

And most of them are. Conklin has avoided, with only a few exceptions, the oft-reprinted war-

horses of weird literature, and has concentrated on finding frankly bloodcurdling yarns of lesser fame. On hand, in order, are:

"The Screaming Woman," Ray Bradbury—a murder story with all of Bradbury's excesses and beauties, notable for utterly grisly insight into the child-mind.

"A Bottomless Grave," Ambrose Bierce—a broad and cheek-tonguing farce in what has since become known as the Charles Addams vein; this story is as good a parody of the weird-tale genre as has ever been penned.

Richard Hughes' "The Cart" —not a complete story but a brief fragment of nightmare, memorable as it stands but irritatingly oblique at the end.

"The Graveyard Rats," by Henry Kuttner—the first-published story by the late Kuttner; it's strictly derivative, borrowing from Lovecraft all the way, but it's notable as a demonstration of Kuttner's technical mastery even in 1936, and the finale is magnificently gruesome.

"The Skin," by Roald Dahl—a *New Yorker* story and the sprightliest in the book: light, grotesque, funny, brilliantly told. Not a fantasy at all, but it has a definite place in this volume.

"Night Court," by Mary Elizabeth Counselman—a tract against reckless driving, written in slickly sentimental terms and annoyingly moralistic in tone, but redeemed totally by the unexpected shocker at the end.

"Free Dirt," by Charles Beaumont—a sort of surrealistic horror story, awkwardly written and clumsily contrived. It doesn't seem to belong in the company it finds itself keeping here.

"Listen, Children, Listen," by Wallace West—plenty of local color, Maw-and-Paw stuff; I don't find this sort of story appealing, but of its kind it seems to be well done.

"Special Delivery," John Collier—Collier's classic story of the young man who falls in love with a window dummy. Comic and tragic all at once, with that wonderful Collier cruelty.

"The Child that Loved a Grave," by Fitz-James O'Brien—oldest story in the collection, dating from 1861, and a peculiar little thing it is, too: an oddball story of childhood, faintly musty in the writing and inexplicably moving despite it.

"The Outsider," by H. P. Lovecraft—the Master himself, in one of his most-familiar stories: as usual, overwritten, almost funny in its Poeishness, and yet— in spite of its being based on what seems to me to be some totally untenable propositions—the ending still comes with the *frisson* its author intended.

The final item in the collection is also the lone new one: a short story by Theodore Sturgeon, clev-

erly (and appropriately) titled "The Graveyard Reader." In the space of a few thousand words Sturgeon compresses not only a lovely and unique weird-tale gimmick but a story of marital infidelity and another warmly compassionate Sturgeon ending. Sturgeon's simple story is deeper and infinitely more moving than the adjectival fancies of the Lovecraftian school; it's also the best in the book.

But most of these stories are by intention nasty and unpleasant, while the rest deal in lighter fashion with nasty and unpleasant themes. Can it be that people sufficiently perturbed by what they read in the papers are no longer interested in reading of interstellar wars and atomic doom in fiction magazines? It can be the only explanation for the surprising resurgence of interest in the creepy-crawly stuff. It's a depressing thought for science fiction writers to consider: no longer confident that there will *be* a future, the public is losing interest in fiction that purports to deal with that future, and is turning instead to the older tradition of fantasy. Those of us who earn our bread by satisfying the public's reading desires might do well to start brushing up on ectoplasm and ghouls; meanwhile, an enterprising sociologist could find fertile ground for investigation here.

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DON'T SHOOT THE NEWSDEALER!

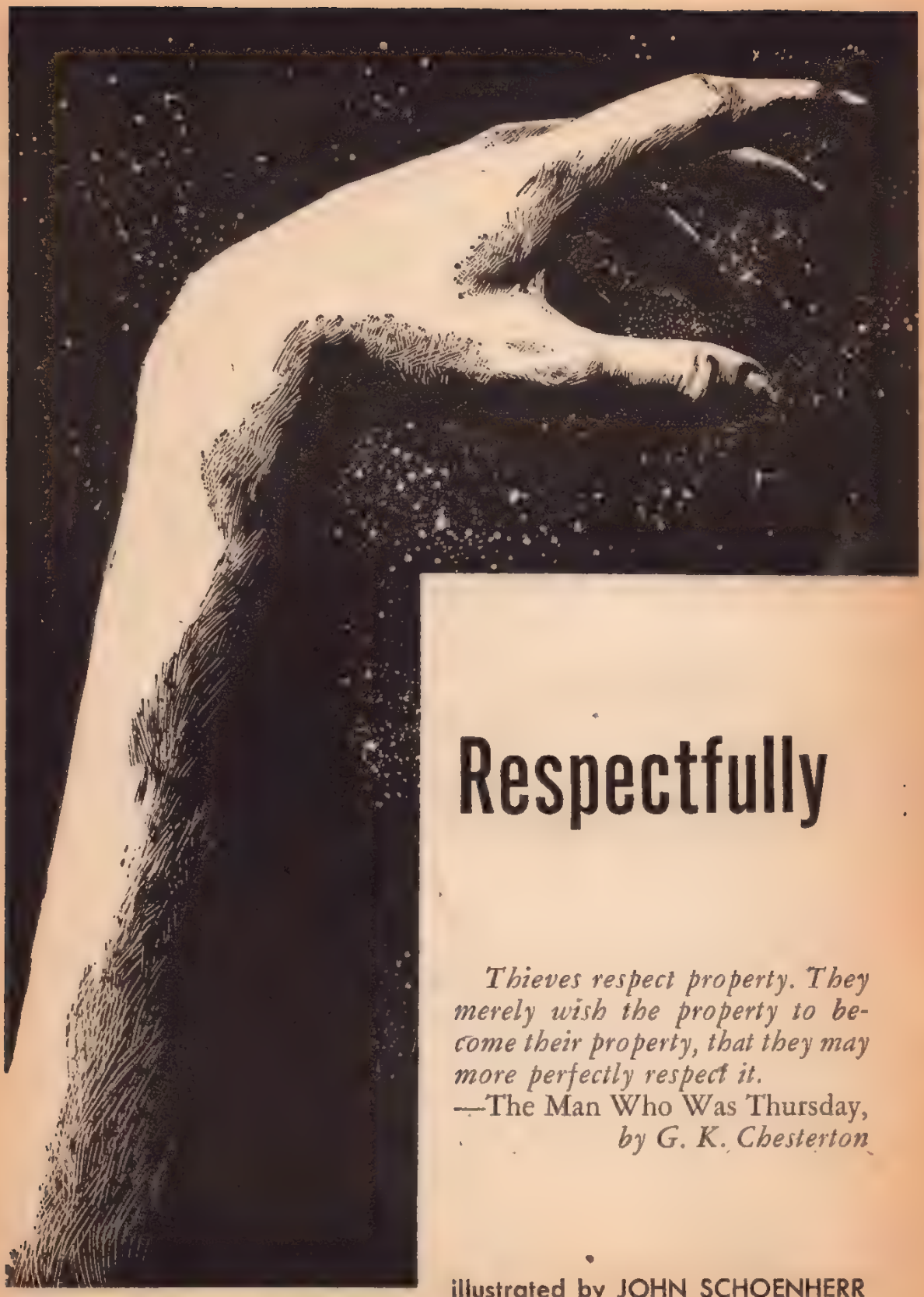
The newsstand distribution situation is improving, but there are still locations where INFINITY doesn't go on sale regularly, or appears only in limited numbers. It isn't the dealers' fault; naturally, they want to sell the magazines you want to buy. But distribution depends on a complicated chain of moves, and it takes time to eliminate all the weak links.

If you're one of the people who have been having trouble finding INFINITY on sale, there are two things you can do:

1. Let us know about it. Tell us the name and address of your local newsstand, and we'll see that it receives a supply of copies of every issue.

2. Subscribe. Send $3.50 for 12 issues ($4.50 if you live outside the U. S., its territories and possessions, or Canada) to the Subscription Department, Royal Publications, Inc., 11 West 42nd Street, New York 36, N. Y. You'll receive your copies by mail, prior to the newsstand on-sale date.

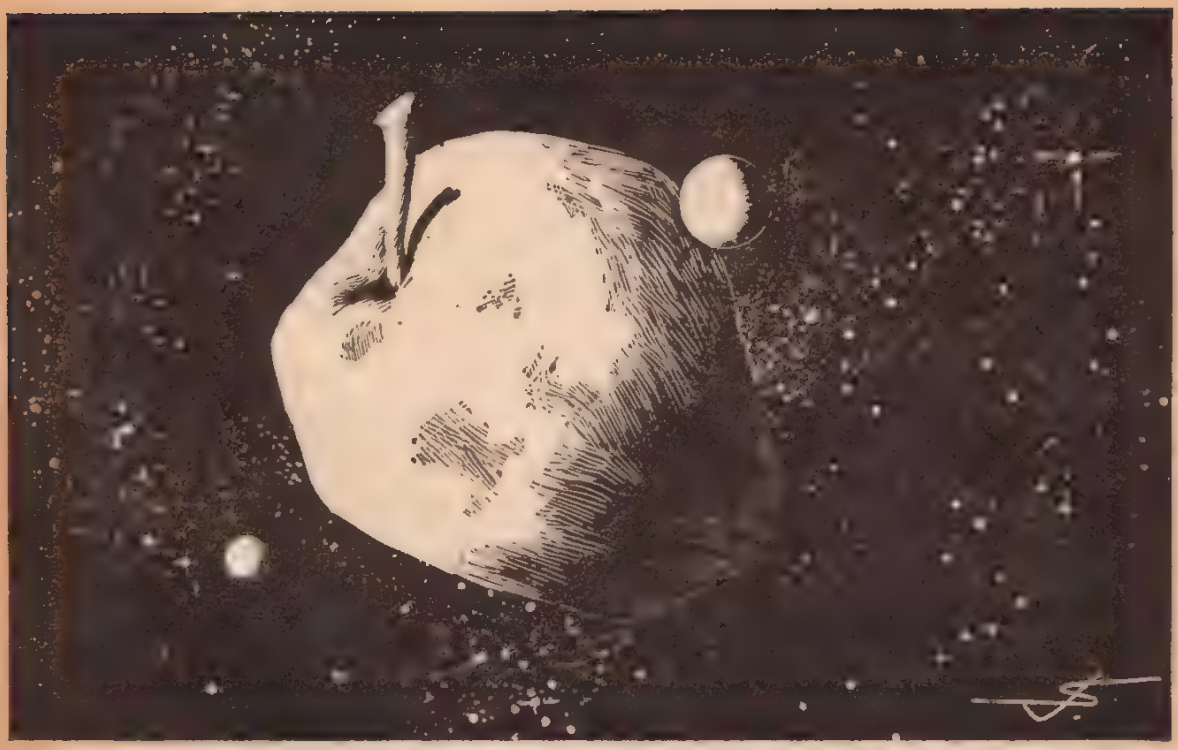
We heartily endorse both these methods—but subscribing might be particularly wise now that we're monthly!



Respectfully

Thieves respect property. They merely wish the property to become their property, that they may more perfectly respect it.
—The Man Who Was Thursday,
by G. K. Chesterton

illustrated by JOHN SCHOENHERR



Mine

By RANDALL GARRETT

TRACING the path of a human being over a million parsecs of space and a half century of time isn't easy, even when the subject makes no effort to conceal his route or confuse his contem-

Leland Hale was undoubtedly the cleverest crook in the universe. But how could even he crack that closely-guarded time capsule?

poraries. The difficulty increases by a factor of at least ten when the subject is a wily, clever, and thoroughly ruthless scoundrel like Leland Hale. If it was difficult for the Interstellar Police to track down Hale a century ago, it is easy to see why it would be almost impossible today. The records are too sketchy.

But while it is virtually impossible to give any coherent chronological account of the life of Leland Hale, it is certainly possible to deduce what did happen during those periods of his life which are accurately documented. Modern psychometric analysis enables us to pinpoint his character down to the seventieth decimal place, and that, in turn, enables us to see what he *must* have done in a given circumstance, being the kind of man he was.

Folk legend has a tendency to make heroes of even the vilest of villains, provided they are colorful enough, and no amount of fact ever quite smothers the romantic legend. Such mythical or semi-mythical characters as Robin Hood, Jesse James, Billy the Kid, John Dillinger, Captain Hamling Fox III, and Hilary Boone were all rascals to the core, but even today they have their practicing cults. But the *cultus* peculiar to Leland Hale seems to outshine them all, and for the singularly perverse reason that he was worse than all the rest rolled together. Indeed, he has been touted throughout the galaxy as a sort of super Simon Templar, who "robbed from the rich and gave to the poor." Rob from the rich he did, but the recipient was Leland Hale, who was rarely, if ever, in penurious circumstances.

If there is any way in which the legends of Leland Hale do not exaggerate, it is in the descriptions of his physical size. Here, there is no need to exaggerate; Hale stood six feet six in his bare feet and had an absolute mass of some one hundred thirty-eight kilograms—very little of it fat. His hair was black and his skin was deeply tanned; his face was hard, blocky, and handsome. Mentally, he was brilliant; morally, he had one philosophy—"Leland Hale deserves to own the galaxy." He knew the goal was unobtainable, but he worked steadily at it.

What he wanted, he took, and if it wasn't available, he took the next best thing—all of which brings us around to the peculiar incident on the planet Apfahl.

A CENTURY ago, Apfahl was just one of those little backwater planets that cluttered the fringes of the main streams of galactic trade. During the early colonization of the planet, the great southern continent was the only section of the new world that seemed worth colonizing. By the end of

the first three centuries, it was fairly well covered with people, and those people had divided themselves into two groups.

The southernmost part of the continent, being closer to the pole, and higher in altitude, was occupied by semi-nomadic herdsmen who kept animals that could graze on the almost untillable tundra. The northern peoples, on the other hand, became farmers.

As a result, the Apfahlians quarrelled over the rightful seat of the colony government, and, after much strife, *two* capitals were set up, and the country of Sudapfahl and the country of Nordapfahl glared at each other across the boundary that separated them.

Just where the name *Apfahl* came from, no one is quite sure. Since it was originally colonized by people from Vega IV, which in turn was colonized directly from Earth by people of Old Germanic stock, an attempt has been made to trace the name through that language. The attempt has resulted in two schools of thought.

One school contends that the word comes from the Old Earth German word *Apfel,* which means "apple"; the other school, with an equally sound basis, insists that the name is derived from *Abfall,* meaning "garbage." Which school of thought one follows seems to be entirely dependent on whether one is an inhabitant of the planet or has merely visited there.

Leland Hale was, perhaps, an exception to that rule; the first time he saw it, hanging in the blackness a couple of hundred thousand miles out of the forward plate of his expensive private ship, the planet looked very much like an apple—ripe and ready for plucking. Naturally.

Now, about all the average galactic citizen knows about Apfahl these days is that it was the birthplace of Dachboden; as a matter of fact, that's all anybody thought of it as a hundred years ago. Someone says: "R. Philipp Dachboden, the Painter of Apfahl," and everyone nods knowingly. But it would be worth your while to give five-to-one odds against any given person being able to tell you what sector it's in. And, actually, that's as it should be; aside from the fact that R. Philipp Dachboden was born there, Apfahl has no claim whatever to galactic prominence.

But it almost did. If it hadn't been for Leland Hale—

IN ORDER to understand exactly what happened, we'll have to look over our cast of main characters. Aside from Leland Hale himself, there are two gentlemen who played no small part in the Apfahlian farce.

Hinrik Fonshliezen was a tall,

dark, lean specimen with a corvine nose, a vulpine mind, and a porcine greed. Lest this list of characteristics smack too much of the animalistic, let it be said that Fonshliezen's memory was *not* elephantine, which was too bad for him.

Hinrik's great grandfather, one Villim Fonshliezen, had managed, through dint of much hard labor and much underhanded business, to amass one of the biggest ranches in Sudapfahl. By the time Hinrik's generation rolled around, the Fonshliezen holdings were great enough to make it worth Hinrik's while to enter politics—which, of course, he did. In what is known as due time, he reached the position of State Portfolio, a chancellorship second only to the Prime Chancellor himself.

It is easily understandable that his ambitions included the Primacy itself. He knew, however, that his chances of actually getting the office were slim. He was efficient; he could handle any of the Portfolios in the File with ease. He had been elected to the File from his own county because he had financial control of that country, but winning a General Election was something else again, because he was not a popular man.

That is not to say he was *un*popular; probably he was no more generally disliked than any other politician. But he simply didn't have the knack of attracting favorable attention to himself; he was not, to put it bluntly, a lovable man. He had very carefully avoided doing anything that would make the public angry with him, but avoiding hatred is not the same thing as attracting love.

Having come to this realization, Hinrik Fonshliezen found himself looking for either a good deed to do or a good press agent —or both.

Let's leave him looking for the moment, and skip up above the border into the country of Nordapfahl. In the city of Grosstat, we will find the Museum of Cultural History, and within that museum, seated in a comfortable, book-lined office, we find the museum's director, Dr. Rudolf Mier.

Physically, Dr. Mier was easily distinguishable from Fonshliezen. To parallel the previous trope, Mier was porcine in build, bovine in manner, and lupine in business matters.

Mier liked the good things of life—food, liquor, women, fine art, good music, and well-tailored clothes. He overindulged in all of them except liquor and women. He was moderate in his use of the former because he found drunkenness repulsive, and of the latter because women found *him* repulsive.

The Museum of Cultural History was his great love, however; as long as he had it and his work,

he could dispense with many of life's little luxuries—if it became absolutely necessary to dispense with them. The Museum wasn't much by galactic standards. It had only been in existence for a couple of centuries, and, in a scanty civilization such as that of Apfahl, two hundred years isn't much time to pick up a museum full of really valuable and worthwhile exhibits. The faded uniform of Field Marshal So-and-so might excite the beating, patriotic hearts of an Apfahlian, but it was of very little worth as a cultural relic.

But to Dr. Mier, the Museum was one of the great landmarks of human history. He envisaged a day, not too far distant, when his small collection would be known as the Apfahlian Division of the Interstellar Museum of Natural and Cultural History. According to the records of the Interstellar Museum, Dr. Rudolf Mier actually made tactful, cautious reaches toward such a goal. He was tactfully reminded that it would be necessary to "improve the general standards" of the Apfahlian museum before any such recognition could be granted.

Dr. Mier did not actually think that such recognition would come in his own lifetime; he was somewhat of an idealist, and we must give him credit for that. But one day certain papers—very old-looking and yellowed papers—came to his attention, and he sent off a hurried spacegram to the Board of the Interstellar Museum.

In view of the fact that the Interstellar Museum's directors did not get around to considering the spacegram for nearly two months, it is unusual that Mier got an immediate reply to his communication. But Mier didn't know that, and he was very pleased to hear that an art expert, Dr. Allen H. Dale, was being dispatched immediately to appraise the situation.

The eminent Dr. Dale had some trouble in reaching the planet; big space liners did not—and still do not—make regular stops at Apfahl. Dr. Dale did, however, manage to get the captain of the I.S.S. *Belvedere* to veer aside from his predetermined course and drop his passenger to Apfahl in a small flitter. It cost Dr. Dale a goodly sum, but it was worth it.

When they were near the planet, the *Belvedere* stopped, and Dr. Dale went aboard the flitter with the pilot.

Dr. Dale, the art expert, had a full, graying beard that covered half his face, and a large shock of graying hair. He might have been a muscular man, but the cut of his clothes made his six and a half feet of body seem fat and clumsy. He gave the impression of a man who could neither fight nor run, but who depended on superior

pomposity to stare down his opponents.

The flitter pilot strapped himself down and said: "Not much money on Apfahl. Still, I hear there's something stirring." He adjusted Dr. Dale's seat. "Something about art, eh?" He looked at his passenger as if expecting some comment.

He was not disappointed. Dr. Dale cleared his throat and said: "Yes. There has been some excitement in artistic circles of late. Of course, the news only came out a few weeks ago, and it takes time for anything like that to spread around the galaxy, even among the civilized planets."

The pilot twiddled switches and control knobs as he eased the little ship into a landing orbit. "Well, whatever it is, it must be important for a man to lay out all the extra cash it costs to get Captain Gremp to stop the *Belvedere* and drop you off." Again he glanced at his passenger.

"Young man," said Dr. Dale, "if you are trying to pump me for information, that is no way to go about it; on the other hand, if you are merely trying to keep a conversation going, there is no need to be coy. I am not on a secret mission for the Interstellar Police, nor am I normally a close-mouthed man. If you are curious, say so; I can give you a full explanation before we land."

The pilot reddened a little. "Well—uh—yes. I *was* sort of wondering what's supposed to be so important about a piece of wood." Gingerly, he applied power as the ship dropped toward the cloud-flecked surface of Apfahl.

"Piece of wood!" Dr. Dale seemed in agony. His gray beard bristled in indignation. "Young man, I presume you have heard of R. Philipp Dachboden?"

The sarcasm in his voice was light, but even so the pilot reddened more deeply. A hundred years ago, the brilliant genius of Dachboden was perhaps not quite as widely appreciated as it is today, but even then, two centuries after his death, the name of R. Philipp Dachboden ranked with those of Da Vinci and Matisse.

"You are aware, I think," continued the pompous doctor, "that Dachboden did all his sculpture in the wood of the *dynak* tree, which is native to Apfahl?"

"Sculpture?" asked the pilot. "I thought he was a painter."

"He was," said Dr. Dale sourly. "His paintings are worth tens of thousands. But his carvings are worth hundreds of thousands. There are only eighteen examples of his work known to be in existence. Now there is reason to believe there may be a nineteenth."

"Oh yeah," said the pilot. "He left one in the time capsule, eh?"

"Presumably. We'll know in a few weeks."

"I guess there'll be a lot of art experts coming in pretty soon, then, huh?" the pilot asked.

"I expect my colleagues to arrive on the *Quinsen,* out of Denebola. It's the next scheduled liner to make a stop here at Apfahl. I, however, wanted to get the jump on them. Get in on the ground floor, so to speak," the doctor told him.

"I getcha," said the pilot. It didn't occur to him to wonder what good it would do to get in early when the time capsule wouldn't open until the scheduled time, anyway, and by then all the art experts for a thousand parsecs around would be clustered on the spot.

WHEN the flitter landed, the self-important Dr. Allen H. Dale supervised the unloading of his luggage at the third-rate little spaceport near the city of Grosstat, a few miles from the shores of the Kaltvosser Sea. It hadn't been grounded ten minutes before a big, black, newly-made automobile of quaintly antique design rolled up to the edge of the landing pit. Two uniformed men got out and stood at attention at the rear door, which opened to disgorge a third man, a civilian. The civilian was almost as broad as Dr. Dale, but not nearly so tall; he looked well-fed, almost oily, and he had a smug expression on his round face.

Flanked by the two uniformed men, the portly civilian moved ponderously toward the heap of traveling bags and the gray-bearded man who was standing beside them.

"Dr. Allen Dale?" he asked respectfully.

If, by this time, the astute reader has begun to suspect that Leland Hale might perhaps be lurking behind that gray beard and that anagrammatical alias, that reader may give himself a small pat on his back. Leland Hale was perfectly capable of posing as an art expert for the very simple reason that he *was* an art expert. Therefore, it was with perfect and utter aplomb that he turned to the fat civilian, evinced moderate surprise, and said: "I am Dr. Dale, sir. And whom have I the honor of addressing?"

The civilian bowed very slightly, a mere angling of the spine and a slight bob of the head. "I have," said the chubby one in slightly accented Standard, "the honor to be the director of the Grosstat Museum of Cultural History, Dr. Rudolf Mier."

Leland Hale looked pleasantly surprised. "Ah! Dr. Mier! A very great pleasure to meet you, sir."

"We received your subradiogram, Doctor," said Mier. "Naturally, I, myself, came to meet you."

"Naturally," agreed Leland Hale.

"We get very few extra-planetary visitors here," Dr. Mier continued apologetically. "Apfahl is, I fear, a little off the—ah—beaten path. Of course, we expect—"

"—to be more widely recognized after the opening of the time capsule," Leland Hale finished for him. "Of course. And it's only right. The galaxy must give due respect to the birthplace of the great Dachboden—and they shall, never fear."

The Director looked like a freshly-petted cocker spaniel.

"We have arranged for your stay here, Dr. Dale. The Kayser Hotel is holding a suite for you. Your instruments—" He gestured toward the pile of luggage. "—will be taken there. I wonder if you would honor me with your presence at lunch?"

"By all means, my dear Director—but the honor will be entirely mine."

Within three minutes, Leland Hale was firmly planted in the rear seat of the car beside the Director of the Museum of Cultural History, while the uniformed men sat in front, one of them tooling the vehicle off down the narrow concrete roadway toward the city of Grosstat.

"Tell me," said Leland Hale, "how did all this come about? The news releases were very sketchy."

Rudolf Mier leaned back comfortably in his seat and allowed a look of semi-concentration to envelope his face.

"Well, it all began a couple of centuries ago—back during Dachboden's lifetime. That's when the Museum was founded, you know." Then he stopped and looked at Hale. "Ah—*do* you know? I mean, are you acquainted with the history of Apfahl?"

Hale looked properly embarassed. "I'm afraid I know very little, Doctor. In spite of Dachboden's fame, Apfahl has not shared that fame as it properly should. Let us say that, although Apfahl basks in the glory of her renowned son, she doesn't reflect too much of it. You will have to assume I know absolutely nothing, I'm afraid."

"I see," said Mier. "Well, then, at any rate, the Museum was founded by a group of our forefathers for the purpose of preserving the unique heritage that is Apfahl's. In accordance with this ideal, they proposed to bury a time capsule containing contemporary artifacts. You are acquainted with the practice, I assume?"

"It's quite common," said Hale.

"As it should be. Each age should take pains to be sure that the ensuing age does not lose its heritage."

"Of course." Hale honestly didn't see why it should—if Hale could ever be said to do anything honestly. Anything worth preserv-

ing was not the sort of junk that was usually put in a time capsule. Oh, well—

"The capsule is of the standard type," Mier continued. "Hermetically sealed, with a tamperproof time lock activated by a radio-decay clock. It's set to open at —" He rattled off a string of numbers, and then went on to explain the Apfahlian calendar, winding it up with: "Our calendar is very scientific."

"Very," said Hale.

"At any rate, the capsule was buried underneath the Museum and then practically forgotten. Oh, we knew it was there, but little notice has been taken of the fact over the past century and more. We don't even know what is in it—that is, not in detail. The official list, for instance, simply says that 'various objects of art' are included, but it makes no mention of Dachboden. That's not too strange, really, since the great man's contemporaries didn't recognize his genius.

"But recently we have uncovered a book—a very old book, which we believe was owned by Dachboden himself. Inside it, there was the beginning of a letter addressed to a friend, in which Dachboden mentioned that one of his dynak-wood statues had been picked to be put in the time capsule, and had been sealed in just the day before the letter was written.

"Naturally, as soon as we heard of that, we of the Museum exhumed the time capsule to check again the exact date upon which it is due to reopen. It is now under careful guard within the Museum itself."

As the car rolled into the outskirts of Grosstat, Hale looked around and remarked: "So this is the birthplace of the famous Dachboden."

The expression on the face of the Director changed slightly; he looked a little flustered.

"Well, not exactly," he said.

Hale turned on him, surprise showing in his eyes. "Not exactly? Oh, come now, my dear Director; either it is or it isn't —eh?"

"Ah—well, yes. It isn't Uh—what I mean to say is that, although Dachboden spent most of his life in Grosstat, he was actually born in Grunfelt."

"Oh?"

"Yes." He waved a hand in a little nervous circle. "You must understand that Apfahl is, as I said, a rather—ah—well, *backward* is too strong a word, but—" He stopped, swallowed, began again. "You see, Dr. Dale, Apfahl does not yet have a united planetary government. We have —ah—*two* sectors, each independently governed. Of course, we who are more enlightened deplore such a state of affairs, but —" He stopped again and smiled

weakly. "However that may be, Dr. Dale, it so happens that R. Philipp Dachboden was born, not in this nation of Nordapfahl, but in the country of Sudapfahl."

"But he came here to work, eh?"

Mier bobbed his head in an emphatic *yes*. "Of course! No man of his brilliance could have been expected to stay in the art-smothering atmosphere of Sudapfahl as it was two hundred years ago. Or even, for that matter, as it is today."

"Well, well," boomed Leland Hale with pompous heartiness, "you are certainly fortunate. Very fortunate indeed, Dr. Mier. To think that there, in your museum, you have an art treasure worth many hundreds of thousands of stellors—possibly a million. Marvelous!"

Dr. Rudolf Mier positively glowed. "Well—yes—I suppose we are pretty lucky at that." A slight frown came over his face. "It has always been—ah—somewhat of a thorn in the side of Apfahl — especially Nordapfahl — that Dachboden was a little un-

grateful in not allowing us to keep at least one example of his art."

Leland Hale placidly refrained from pointing out that Dachboden would have starved to death trying to sell his material on Apfahl two centuries before. In the first place, no one there appreciated him, and in the second place, there wasn't much money to be spent on art. Even the little amount Dachboden got for his work off-planet was a tremendous sum as far as Apfahl's economy was concerned.

THE LUNCHEON was typically Apfalian fare—rough, tasteless, but nourishing. Hale ate it stolidly, neither liking nor disliking it; he was merely indifferent to it. Dr. Mier on the other hand, complained that it wasn't properly cooked and still managed to put away enough for three men.

"Tell me, Doctor," said Hale, when he found a lull between courses, "have you considered the idea that someone might steal such a valuable object?"

Mier finished chewing a bite, swallowed it, and shook his head.

"There is not much chance of that, Dr. Dale. In the first place, it is locked within the capsule. Oh, I'll admit that the entire capsule could be stolen; it is big, but not so big that it couldn't be taken by someone with the proper equipment.

"However, that kind of equipment isn't available to the average man here on Apfahl. And besides, it is thoroughly guarded. After we dug it up from the basement, our government provided the Museum with a full battalion of armed troops to surround the building day and night. No unauthorized person can get in, and they certainly couldn't get the time capsule out."

"Wouldn't it be possible to break into the capsule?"

Dr. Mier chuckled deeply. "You have not seen this capsule. Oh, I'll grant that it might be broken into, but doing so would involve so much damage that the contents would be ruined, rendering the attempt useless. No, Dr. Dale; no one will steal our little treasure." He chuckled again, and, as the next course was brought on, he began shoveling it in. The silence was unbroken save for the sounds of eating.

After a few moments, Leland Hale glanced casually at his watch and compared it with the big mechanical clock on the wall of the hotel cafe. He hoped his timing was correct.

It was. Seven minutes later, a man wearing the uniform of a Museum guard scuttled into the room as though he were being followed by a fleet of hornets. He stopped near the door, glanced rapidly over all the diners, located Dr. Mier, and made his way hurriedly toward the table.

"Dr. Mier! Dr. Mier!" His rasping voice was about as secretive as a stage whisper. The other diners swiveled their heads to look.

Mier, startled, glanced up at the messenger.

"Yes, Mooler? Speak up, man; what is it?"

The uniformed man put a single sheet of paper on the table. "This just came over the teletype wire from our correspondent in Sudapfahl, sir! Read it!"

Dr. Mier read, and, as he did so, his eyes widened. "Good Heavens!" he said at last, "This is terrible!"

"What?" asked Leland Hale, in all innocence.

"This!" Mier shoved the teletype sheet across the table.

GRUNFELT, SUDAPFAHL: THE EXCELLENT HINRIK FONSHLIEZEN, PORTFOLIO OF STATE, ANNOUNCED TODAY THE DISCOVERY OF A TIME CAPSULE SIMILAR TO THAT IN THE MUSEUM OF GROSSTAT, NORDAPFAHL. THE CAPSULE, SET FOR A DATE APPROXIMATELY ONE

DAY LATER THAN THAT OF THE NORTHERN CAPSULE, IS SAID TO BE BURIED BENEATH THE CAPITOL BUILDING, ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL RECORDS DISCLOSED TO THE PUBLIC THIS MORNING. EXCAVATIONS WILL BEGIN IMMEDIATELY. ACCORDING TO HIS EXCELLENCY'S STATEMENT, IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE CAPSULE MAY CONTAIN SOME EXAMPLES OF THE WORK OF R. PHILIPP DACHBODEN.

Leland Hale read it carefully and shook his head. "Dear me," he said mildly.

"It may mean nothing to you, an outsider," said Dr. Mier bitterly, "but do you realize that to us this is a matter of national honor and prestige?"

"Oh, yes. Of course. Naturally. Believe me, Dr. Mier, I certainly appreciate your position." He spread his hands slightly. "But, of course, you realize that, as a representative of the Interstellar Museum, I will have to check on the Sudapfahlian claim." Before Mier could voice any objections, Leland Hale silenced him with a wave of his hand. "You have nothing to worry about, Dr. Mier; as you know, the Interstellar Museum only allows one branch to a planet. Naturally, your museum would certainly have priority over that of Sudapfahl."

"Sudapfahl doesn't even have a museum," Mier said, looking fatly superior.

"Besides," Hale continued mollifyingly, "I shan't go there until after I have seen what your own time capsule has to offer. It seems to me that the Sudapfahlian government actually doesn't know what's inside their capsule. Their statements seem to be made out of pure jealousy."

"You're probably quite right, Dr. Dale," said Mier.

"Oh, I know I'm right," said Leland Hale truthfully.

AFTER LUNCH, Dr. Allen H. Dale informed Dr. Mier that, as he was a bit fatigued from his trip, he would like to rest for a few hours. Mier agreed wholeheartedly, and the two men made an appointment to meet later in the afternoon for a tour of the Grosstat Museum of Cultural History, and perhaps dinner and a few drinks afterwards.

After seeing his guest into his room, Dr. Mier strolled out of the hotel, stepped into his car, and ordered the driver to take him to the Museum. There were big things to be done. This new threat from the south was not to be taken too lightly.

At the Museum—a huge, cold-looking, blocky granite structure—Mier climbed out of his car, toiled up the broad stairs to the entrance, and strolled rollingly

in. On every side, flunkies, both in uniform and out, bowed and scraped as the Great Man passed by. Dr. Mier reached his book-lined office just as the telephone rang.

He picked up the instrument, a mechanism of ancient design possessing no vision equipment, and announced that he was Dr. Rudolf Mier.

"This is Lieutenant-Marshal Dilon, State Police. You have just returned from lunch with a Dr. Allen H. Dale, purporting to be from the Galactic Museum?"

"Why, yes; I just—What do you mean, *purporting?*"

"We have reason to believe, Doctor, that this man is wanted by the Interstellar Police. We have received a communication from I.P. headquarters warning us that Dr. Allen H. Dale is actually a man named Leland Hale."

"Who is Leland Hale?"

"A criminal, Doctor. He is wanted so badly that the I.P. is actually sending a contingent of men here to apprehend him," said the lieutenant-marshal.

"A criminal, yes—but what kind of a criminal?"

"I gather," said the lieutenant-marshal drily, "that he steals things. I imagine he's after the Dachboden original."

"That's ridiculous! He couldn't possibly get into the Museum! It's surrounded by—" His voice choked off as he realized that he, himself, had already extended an invitation to "Dr. Dale" to come to the Museum. "But—but—I spoke to Dr. Dale for over an hour! He can't be a thief."

"Possibly not," agreed Lieutenant-Marshal Dilon. "The Interstellar Police aren't always right, and I must say I don't care for their high-handed manner at times. Nevertheless, we'll have to take proper precautions. I'll see that the guard around the Museum is reinforced, and send out a pickup order on Dr. Dale. If there's been any mistake made, it will be the fault of the I.P. Meanwhile, I would appreciate it Doctor, if you would come to my office. We've got to make better arrangements for the protection of the time capsule."

AND THUS the call went out for Dr. Allen H. Dale.

He wasn't found, of course. By the time the police got to the hotel, he had "mysteriously" vanished. By the simple expedient of shaving off his beard and removing the gray from his hair had changed his appearance enough so that a mere change of clothing was all that was needed to completely dispose of Dr. Allen H. Dale. Leland Hale was never one to be caught napping; he was never one to be caught at all.

Naturally, a planet-wide alarm went out. Even Sudapfahl, warned that the "arch-criminal" might at-

tempt to steal the contents of their own time capsule, sent out word to all local police forces to be on the alert.

Two days later, a fast, fully-armed Interstellar Police cruiser settled to the landing pit of the spaceport in Grosstat, Nordapfahl, and disgorged a squad of eighty I.P. troopers under the command of Captain Bradney W. Whitter, a tough, shrewd law officer with twenty years of experience behind him.

Whitter had been up against Leland Hale before; he still carried a white, puckered scar on one leg, a reminder of Leland Hale's ability to use a megadyne handgun. If Leland Hale was actually on Apfahl, Captain Whitter intended to get him.

IN THE office of Dr. Mier, the captain called a conference. Present were himself, Dr. Mier, Lieutenant-Marshal Dilon, and several others, high officers of the I.P., the museum staff, and the Nordapfalian State Police.

"Gentlemen," Captain Whitter said determinedly, "we are going to get Leland Hale this time. We've got him."

Lieutenant-Marshal Dilon lifted a heavy eyebrow. "I'm afraid I don't quite see how, Captain." He made an all-inclusive gesture toward the window. "He has a whole planet to hide from us in. A great part of it is still wilderness, jungle, desert, and arid mountains.

The captain's granite face turned toward Dilon. "My dear Marshal, it is obvious that you don't know Leland Hale. He is not the type of man to hide out in the hills forever. I doubt that he even took off for the hinterlands; I wouldn't be surprised if he were right here in Grosstat."

The marshal shrugged heavy shoulders. "I'll admit it's possible. This is a city of three-quarters of a million people. He might be difficult to find."

"The galaxy is a damned sight bigger than that," Whitter pointed out. "Hale could have hidden out long ago if that were the way he operated. But he doesn't. He hits and runs and then comes back to hit again. A louse he may be, but I never underestimate an opponent; he's smart and he's got guts. And he's got pride. And that's what will catch him."

"I'm afraid I don't understand you," said Dr. Mier.

Whitter glanced down at the director. "Your time capsule seems to have aroused quite a bit of interest in certain parts of the galaxy, Dr. Mier. That Dachboden carving, especially, has made news on the older worlds—even on Earth, I understand. And now that it is known that Leland Hale has practically announced that he wants that Dachboden, the news services will be watching to see if

he gets it." He grinned sourly. "And believe me, Leland Hale won't turn down a challenge like that."

Marshal Dilon looked more than mildly skeptical. "Do you mean that you think he will attempt it in spite of the precautions we have taken?"

"I do." He looked at the quiet group around him. "We'll have to lay a trap—one that will get Leland Hale when he tries to steal that statue. And he'll try, believe me. I know Leland Hale."

The captain was right, as far as he went. Pity he didn't know Leland Hale a little better.

LELAND HALE, smooth-shaven and black-haired, leaned back in a comfortable chair and blew a large smoke ring into the air. He watched it swirl in on itself and slowly dissolve into nothingness.

"Your Excellency," he said, "I must admit that your southern tobacco has more flavor than the milder northern type. This is an excellent cigar."

Hinrik Fonshliezen glared down his long, pointed nose at the big man in the overstuffed chair. "I'm glad you enjoy them, Mr. Hale," he said bitterly. "You may not get them in prison."

Hale glanced up mildly. "Prison? Oh, but I never go to prisons—at least, not for long. I'm allergic to them. They give me a pain—here." He patted his hip pocket.

"If I don't get that statue in time for the opening of our time capsule," said the State Portfolio coldly, "I will at least collect the not inconsiderable reward for your capture."

Leland Hale stood up leisurely and stepped toward the other man. He pointed a finger at Hinrik's face, stopping with the fingertip a scant eighth of an inch from the other's nose.

"Now, listen," he said softly, "I don't care for threats of that kind. Not that they bother me; they don't. But they make me suspicious of my confederates, and that makes me uncomfortable, and I don't like to be uncomfortable. Is that clear?"

Hinrik Fonshliezen backed up a step to remove his nose from the vicinity of the finger. "Don't try to bully me, Hale," he said. But there was a slight waver in his voice.

"Fair enough. I don't bully you, you don't bully me."

"And don't call me your confederate," added Fonshliezen, somewhat encouraged by Hale's manner.

"I'm damned if I'll call you a comrade-in-arms," said Hale. "Would 'assistant' suit you better?"

Fonshliezen reddened. "One of these days you'll push me too far, Hale!"

"When I do, you'll fall," said Hale, in a voice like chilled steel.

"You and I have made a deal. I get that Dachboden for you, and you pay me half a million stellors. That's all there is to it."

The Portfolio of State was not a man to be pushed around easily, but he also had sense enough to know when he was up against a stronger opponent than himself.

Shortly after the original announcement about the time capsule had come from Grosstat, Leland Hale had come to Fonshliezen to offer his services. If Hale stole the Dachboden original, and gave it to Hinrik Fonshliezen, then Sudapfahl could steal the glory from its northern neighbor by claiming that a second capsule had been found. When the northern capsule was discovered to have no statue in it, the pride of Nordapfahl would suffer a serious blow.

But now Fonshliezen was worried.

"But how can you get it now?" he asked. "The planet is full of Interstelar Police agents; the time capsule is tightly guarded. If only the secret of Dr. Dale's identity hadn't leaked out!"

Hale chuckled and settled himself back into the chair.

"Hinrik, old toad, do you know how the I.P. learned about the bogus Dr. Dale?"

The Portfolio had stepped over to a highboy to mix himself a stiff drink. "No," he said, glancing at Hale. "Do you?"

"I do. They got an anonymous message. Of course, they traced it; they know that it was actually sent by an acquaintance of mine on Vandemar, a chap who might have good reason to inform on me."

"How do you know all this?"

Hale blew another smoke ring. "Because I had him send it."

"What? Why?"

Hale shook his head slowly. "You just aren't very bright, Hinrik. Not bright at all. See here; what would have happened if my name had never come into this at all?"

"I should think—"

"I agree. You should. But you don't." Hale dropped the remains of the cigar in an ashtray. "Just suppose that no one knew I was here on Apfahl. On the day the time capsule is due to open, the Nordapfahlians find no original Dachboden in it. The next day, you open a capsule that no one has ever heard of before, and you find a Dachboden. Wouldn't that look rather suspicious? It certainly would."

Fonshliezen considered that point, then asked: "And how do you propose to do it?"

"It's all set up, Hinrik. Now they know that I am here. They know that I will try to steal the carving. If I succeed, why should they suspect you? You will demand a troop of I.P. men to guard your own capsule, too. You

will issue a statement saying that all national differences must be submerged in order to capture Leland Hale. And, in the end, you will have the carving, and Nordapfahl will not—which will prove that Sudapfahlians are better guards than the northerners."

Hinrik Fonshliezen nodded slowly, and a faint smile crossed his pointed face. "I see. Yes—I see. Very clever, Mr. Hale, very clever." Then the smile vanished again. "But I don't see how you're going to get at the capsule with that guard around it."

"I managed to plant that capsule of mine under your capitol building without being detected by the local citizens. Don't worry, I'll manage."

Hinrik snorted. "There was no guard around the capitol when you planted your bogus time capsule; there most definitely is a guard around the one in Grosstat."

"Let me worry about that," said Hale. "All you have to do is have that half million ready. And remember, I can always sell the Dachboden elsewhere. I won't get as much, I grant you, but I'll still make a tidy profit."

Hinrik Fonshliezen grimaced. "Suppose — just suppose — that you don't get the carving. Where will that leave me?"

Hale shrugged. "No better off, and no worse. You'll simply have a time capsule of no importance. After all, you haven't claimed that there actually is a Dachboden in it, while Dr. Mier has definitely made the claim that there is one in *his* capsule."

"Such a thing would not make me popular with the people of Sudapfahl, however," Fonshliezen pointed out. "And that is what this whole thing is supposed to do."

"It wouldn't make you unpopular, either," Hale said. "And neither would it cost you five hundred thousand stellors. You'd come out even." Hale stretched elaborately. "But you don't need to worry; you'll get your statue."

"When?"

"On the day the capsule is due to open. Not a minute before. Meanwhile, I shall make myself comfortable here in your home, where the I.P. won't look for me, and I'll go on making myself comfortable until I'm ready to pull off my little job. Mix me a drink, Hinrik; there's a good fellow."

THE MUSEUM of Cultural History in Grosstat, Nordapfahl, positively bristled with arms and men. Its stone walls looked like those of a fortress instead of a museum.

Captain Whitter had taken every precaution. No guard over six feet in height was allowed within a block of the building; Hale couldn't disguise his height. In-

side the building, technicians with sensitive equipment hovered over dials and meters.

"It's possible that he may try to tunnel under the building," the captain explained. "It wouldn't be too difficult with modern equipment. But if he tries it, we'll have him."

Around the capsule itself stood an honor guard of a dozen picked I.P. men; around them stood a second ring of Lieutenant-Marshal Dilon's men. All through the building, lights blazed brightly as the guard kept on a round-the clock watch.

Precision detectors scanned the skies for any sign of flying craft after a State Police order grounded all aircraft within five miles of the Museum. Special illumination projectors were set up all over the area to pick out anyone wearing an invisibility suit, although the I.P. didn't mention anything about that, since at that time the invisibility suit was supposed to be an official I.P. secret. Nevertheless, Captain Whitter didn't bypass the possibility that Leland Hale might have laid his hands on one of them.

Captain Whitter surveyed his work and found it good.

"We're ready for him," he said. "All we have to do is wait for him to come."

They waited.

And waited.

Eventually, the spaceship *Quinsen,* out of Denebola arrived and several genuine staff members of the Interstellar Museum disembarked, followed by reporters of a score of news services. They were carefully checked and kept well beyond the outer perimeter of the guard.

And the guard went on waiting.

Came the eve of the day of the Grand Opening, the day when the radio-decay clock would release the lock on the time capsule. Captain Whitter was in a nervous sweat by this time, as were the others.

"He'll have to try it tonight," the captain stated positively. "We'll double the guard and sweat him out."

But only the guard did any sweating. The night passed peacefully, if somewhat tensely, and the sun rose on the most jittery bunch of men this side of the Lesser Magellanic Cloud.

And still nothing happened.

When the hour came for the lock to open, the representatives of the Galactic Museum demanded to be let in, but Captain Whitter was as adamant as cast tungsten. No one would be allowed near the capsule until Leland Hale had been captured.

At the final hour, the guards stood nervously around the big metallic cylinder. Within the ring of armed men, Captain Whitter, Lieutenant-Marshal Dilon, and

Dr. Rudolf Mier stood, looking at the capsule and waiting.

Something inside the time capsule clicked softly. A door in its side slid neatly open.

Dr. Mier gasped and ran forward. "It's empty! It's empty!"

Whitter and Dilon were practically on his heels.

A look inside showed that the Director was not quite correct: the capsule wasn't absolutely empty. Inside there was a single sheet of paper; printed on one side was the following message:

Gentlemen:

I'm sure that the late R. Philipp Dachboden appreciates the trouble you have gone to. If it wasn't successful, don't blame yourselves; you tried.

As for the statue and various other objets d'art, *I'm afraid they are now*

Respectfully mine,
Leland Hale.

A SHORT TIME previous to the flamboyant opening of the capsule in Grosstat, and several hundred miles away, His Excellency, Hinrik Fonshliezen, State Portfolio of Sudapfahl, sat nervously in his office. If the I.P. men were sweating, Fonshliezen was absolutely soaked in his own juices. He sat at his desk, looking from his watch to the telephone and back again. He was expecting a call.

Even so, when the phone rang, he jumped. Then he grabbed the instrument. "Hello! Fonshliezen here!" he barked hoarsely.

"Hinrik, old spirillum, I have your merchandise. You know where to meet me. And—ah—remember what I told you."

"You got it? Where have you been? You've been gone for two days! What—"

"That's none of your business, Hinrik; just come on. And remember—none of your clever foxiness."

"I'll remember," Hinrik said.

There was a click as the instrument was hung up.

Hinrik Fonshliezen frowned worriedly and glanced at the briefcase on his desk that held half a million stellors in Interstellar Bank drafts. How could he be sure that Hale actually had the carving? He glanced at his watch again. The news should come through soon. Hale had told him to wait for the news from Nordapfahl.

He was well prepared for any tricks on Hale's part. He had put a special lock on the briefcase; if Hale just tried to take the money, it would be too bad for Hale.

On the other hand, Hinrik Fonshliezen was well aware that he, himself had better not try anything foolish. If Hale were killed or reported to the police—in other words, if he didn't make a clean getaway—certain audio-

video recordings would go to the I.P., disclosing Hinrik's complicity in the deal.

The whole thing had to be on the up-and-up.

The phone rang again. His Excellency picked it up and identified himself. He listened. A broad, wolfish smile spread itself over his face.

So Hale actually did it?" he said. "Well, that's too bad, my dear fellow. Of course, we must take the utmost precautions ourselves."

He hung up, and, whistling softly to himself, he picked up the briefcase and left his office.

FOR ALL of half a day, there was great rejoicing in Sudapfahl when it was discovered that the time capsule in Grunfelt had opened and had disclosed a marvelous collection of two-century-old artifacts, including a Dachboden original. His Excellency, the Portfolio of State, was the man of the day.

But it didn't last more than half a day. When the art experts pronounced the Dachboden a phony, the popularity of Hinrik dropped; when it was proved that the whole time capsule, with contents, was actually the one that belonged in Grosstat, Hinrik's popularity collapsed completely. He was held by the I.P. for questioning and confessed all.

By that time, Leland Hale was a good many parsecs away in his own private ship.

An excerpt from the report filed by Captain Whitter contains some enlightening information.

"What happened became obvious after the fact," the captain wrote. "The whole buildup was a phony from beginning to end. Hale had heard of the time capsule in Grosstat, so he went to Apfahl with a duplicate time capsule, which contained his note. He tunneled underneath the Museum and switched capsules. It was not until after he had made the switch that he planted the forged Dachboden note for Dr. Mier to find.

"There never had been a Dachboden carving in the capsule; that was all a figment of Leland Hale's imagination.

"Dr. Rudolf Mier couldn't understand why Hale had done it. 'Why did he make me think there was a statue in there?' he kept asking me. 'Why did he do this to me?'

"I think the answer is simple. The records show that Hale was on Kessin IV three years ago, during the war there. I believe that he actually was swindled himself; someone sold him a bogus Dachboden. Remember, the art-swindler Fenslaw was killed at that time.

"Hale, therefore, had a phony Dachboden on his hands that he had to unload to save his pride.

More, he had to make a very big profit on it.

"He knew that he couldn't just try to sell it anywhere. Even if he found a sucker who would accept it as real, there wouldn't be enough money in it to make it worth Hale's time.

"He couldn't have sold it to Fonshliezen without the big buildup. If he'd just produced the carving from nowhere, Fonshliezen would have been suspicious. A few simple tests would have shown that the *dynak* wood was less than ten years old.

"Obviously, Hale had to get Fonshliezen into a position where he would accept the carving without testing it.

"Hale, therefore, planted an empty time capsule, with his note inside, under the Museum and took the real capsule with him. By bombarding the time lock with neutrons, he managed to increase the radioactivity enough to keep the lock closed for an additional twenty-four hours, so that he could palm the real capsule off on Fonshliezen as a phony which he had presumably set himself.

"Then he arranged for Dr. Mier to discover the forged note which Dachboden presumably wrote two centuries ago. He had no reason to suspect a forgery, since there was no obvious way for anyone to profit by such a thing.

"What followed from then on was as automatic as the clockwork in the time capsules."

If the Captain was a little bitter, he had a right to be; he'd been made a fool of, just like the others. But he was luckier or hardier than they. He didn't blow his brain to bits with a handgun, as Fonshliezen did; he didn't die, broken and disgraced, as Mier did.

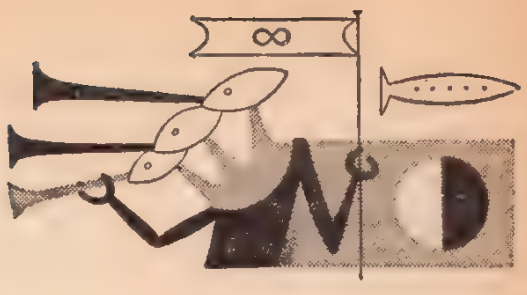
On the other hand, he didn't get off scot-free with a half million stellors to spend, as Leland Hale did.

∞ ∞ ∞

CYRIL KORNBLUTH died of a heart attack on March 21, 1958. He was 35 years of age.

The loss to the science fiction field could not be greater, especially since Kornbluth's death followed so closely that of Henry Kuttner. Kornbluth was almost unbelievably talented, and his output of excellent science fiction was large. He spoke to me of his future writing plans shortly before his death, and there is no doubt that some potential classics died with him.—LTS

Fanfare



SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED

by DEAN A. GRENNELL

THE INHABITANTS of Blasphoum, fourth planet of the star Quebeb, take their justice almost as seriously as their religion, which is to say very seriously indeed.

Jamie Weems and Gino Iannicelli, two small-time Terran jewel specialists, had no yen to learn the inner workings of Blasphoumean justice. Only a jammed lock on the outer door of their spaceship kept them from making a successful getaway.

Under the circumstances, takeoff would have been certain suicide, and they were working in profane, knuckle-gouging haste on the stubborn catch when the Blasphoum equivalent of a vigilante's posse came precipitately upon them.

A search of their ship turned up three cabbage-sized sapphires which were missing from the eyestalks of Gilph, the idol which dominates the capital city's main plaza.

The natives, somewhat piqued at this abuse of their hospitality, took the pair into custody, and court was straightway convened for the purpose of deciding proper punishment for an offense of such heinous nature.

Defense counsel was assigned by the bench and an interpreter was provided. The latter taught English to a small class at the local university, and came equipped with a Blasphoum-English dictionary and a fair vocabulary of his own.

The trial ran for days (and days come *long* on Quebeb IV) but at length the ringing flights of oratory stopped echoing across the vast courtroom. The jury filed out, deliberated a bit longer than forever, and filed back to their box, eighty-one strong. The trio of jury foremen chanted the verdict in fine three-part harmony. Part of the deliberation time had been spent in rehearsal, and they earned a generous round of applause.

Chief Defense Counsel turned to the interpreter and spoke briefly. His expression combined wounded professional pride at losing a case and satisfaction that justice had won out in spite of his best efforts.

The interpreter's words were succinct and to the point.

"They find you guilty as charged."

Iannicelli's attitude was that of the fatalistic malefactor who knows that one day the breaks will turn against him. He merely shrugged and said, "Why shouldn't they? We are."

Weems, his blonde hair dishevelled, whined, "I don't like it, Gino. There isn't even a Federation Consul on this god-forsaken lump of mud. We're in a sweet hell of a spot!"

"What's the sentence?" asked Iannicelli.

The interpreter pointed to the bench with its eighteen judges, "Even now they are weighing your fate."

The judges conferred at great length amid considerable commotion from the excited crowd and furious activity of bailiffs running up and down the aisles trying to maintain some semblance of order.

The senior judge finally rose to his feet—all three of them—and the noise shut off as sharply as if all the air had suddenly been evacuated from the hall. The judge's lower eye looked sternly down at the cringing defendants. The few words he spoke made the crowd roar. The Chief Defense Counsel blanched to a pale chartreuse.

Weems' fingers bit into the interpreter's arm where the elbow would have been if he had had one.

"Quick!" he pleaded. "What did he say? Whaddiddesay?"

The interpreter's eyes dwelt on the pair, compassion outweighing scorn. He had to shout to make himself heard over the tumult of the crowd, which was starting to form into a sort of snake-dance. If such a thing is possible, his shout had a kind of hushed quality.

"You are sentenced to be delivered tomorrow."

Weems pounded Iannicelli's back in glee.

"You hear that, Gino-boy? They're going to deliver us!"

"That's a punishment, Jamie? I don't know of anything I'd like better than getting delivered out of this place."

"They must think that Blasphoum is so wonderful that being sent away is a Fate Worse Than Death or something." Weems' pale eyes, watery at any time, were overflowing in relief.

Their jubilation buoyed them up as they were led off to their cells, still festooned with ropes. Weems greeted the dawn with a

happy shout down the corridor to Iannicelli's cell.

"Hey, Gino! Wake up! This is the day we get delivered!"

"Sure hope so, boy—this place is starting to get on my nerves."

Weems heard a group of Blasphoumeans come slapping down the hall and lead Iannicelli away. He was surprised that they didn't take him along at the same time, but he wasn't especially worried.

Until he heard Iannicelli scream . . .

It was a whimpering, frightened Weems that the group of Blasphoumeans found when they returned for him some time later. The interpreter from the trial was among them. He spoke comfortingly to the gibbering felon as they were dragging him out into the plaza to the feet of the desecrated Gilph.

"Be cheered, sir. It won't take so long to deliver you."

"What do you mean? What did you guys *do* to Gino?"

"We had trouble delivering him. You Terrans are so—different!"

The crowd parted to let them through and Weems could see Iannicelli lying on the ground. When he saw what lay beside his accomplice, Weems screamed too—screamed as if to tear his larynx out. A Blasphoumean was advancing toward him with a bloody knife.

"Don't be afraid," said the interpreter. "He shouldn't have as much trouble finding *your* liver."

∞ ∞ ∞

ABOUT FANFARE AND FANZINES

When space and the availability of material permit, INFINITY will reprint items from fanzines, which are amateur magazines published by science fiction fans and devoted to every subject and form of writing in any conceivable direction from the sun. "Signed, Sealed, and Delivered" was originally printed several years ago, in a fanzine named *Spaceship,* published by none other than Robert Silverberg.

With the suspension of *Science Fiction Adventures,* Archibald Destiny's "Fan-Space" column, in which some fanzine reviews appeared, had to be discontinued. However, if you're interested in knowing more about fanzines, write to Destiny in care of this magazine. He has finally completed arrangements for sending sample copies to prospective readers, and will continue to do so. He wishes to apologize to those who wrote him some time ago and have seen no fanzines yet; they will soon, he assures us.

Feedback

I AM DELIGHTED with the opportunity provided by Alma Hill's letter in the April "Feedback" to say some long overdue things about Ed Emsh. Ed and I have been collaborating willy-nilly for years through the intermediary of some editor or other who would charitably buy a hunk of my prose and fling it at poor Ed with the challenge, "Go ahead, illustrate it. I defy you!" And Ed Emsh has faced manfully up to the task, managing to find hints and possibilities of description in some corner of the yarn. Seriously, I never stop being amazed at the beautiful job he does, whether in color and black and white, and the faithfulness with which he portrays the mood I have tried to achieve.

As for the story in question, "And Then the Town Took Off," I have no quarrel whatever with the direction in which Ed chose to have Jen Jervis faint. I merely wrote "she slumped to the floor" and Ed took it from there, admirably. As a matter of fact, I'm very pleased he didn't have her fall the other way, which would have resulted in a bloody nose, compounding the hero's already complicated existence.

Now, about that "neat, sharp edge" (of Superior): Miss Hill has chosen to misquote me—and I'm not quibbling too much about the fact that she omitted a comma and substituted an "a" for a "the." (Beware us authors, Miss Hill; we're demons where our punctuation is concerned). The full sentence began: "Nevertheless Don could see that it apparently was a neat, sharp edge . . ." Note that "apparently," an extremely useful word. It gives both authors and artists enormous latitude. Actually, the spot where Don looked over the edge *was* neat and sharp—as you would see in Ed's cover painting if that particular part of the edge had not been obscured by Alis Garet's sitty.

In defense of the fact that Don was able to know the levitated town had the shape of an orange cut in half, I need only remind you that the hero was in constant radio contact with people on the ground, who obviously had told him what Superior looked like from down there. He repeated

that information to let the Pentagon people know where the underground room was.

So there. And again my thanks to Ed Emsh for his perfect illustrations and, belatedly, lest I seem ungracious, a deep bow to Alma Hill for thinking it a delightful story.

While I'm being grateful, let me give a loud hurrah for Clifford Simak's "Leg. Forst." in the April issue, and for Orban's sensitive illustrations. I must bemoan, however, your catering to the dimwit set with your cover blurb, "He's a rock 'n' roll superman," and would be gratified to hear that Emsh drew that pinhead in the black leather jacket under duress.—Richard Wilson.

∞

See you at the Solacon! We'll be there. Count on it. And we're hoping we can bring the World SF Convention back with us to Detroit. Detroit in '59!

In fact, we're planning for it. Already we have investigated the Detroit hotels and made our choice. Already we have discussed among ourselves—and decided on—a guest of honor, and begun to plan a program. We invite suggestions.

We Detroiters mean business. We are not a bunch of inexperienced youngsters, nor are we a gang out for cash and glory. All we want is to put on the best convention ever.

Are you with us?—George Young, Fred Prophet, Dean McLaughlin; Michigan Science-Fantasy Society, 11630 Washburn Street, Detroit 4, Michigan.

Detroit is fine with me in '59, and I'll be at the Solacon to vote. Lots of luck!—LTS

∞

I orbit in Infinity
Each time it hits the stands
And relish stars a-shining
In strange and distant lands.

I blast into Infinity
And fleeting parsecs fly;
My fav'rite authors lure me
Beneath an alien sky.

I thrill to yarns of Asimov,
Peterson's wondrous tales,
And Wilson's yakyak doings—
And wish them all more sales.

Wacky robots . . kangaroos
And gently orbiting blondes
Fit the cosmic pace of things
As Science waves its wands.

So keep the orbit steady!
Don't let that nosecone yaw!
Give more by these great authors
Amidst the best of Shaw!

—Ray P. Franklin, Jr.
Spencer, Massachusetts

∞

I have just finished reading the

April issue of INFINITY. It was a good issue all told. The best story being "Wings of the Phoenix." But, the purpose in writing you is to come to the defense of Ed Emsh.

After reading all of the letters criticizing Ed's art work I thought I ought to say something in his defense.

Ed is the only artist of sf who does practically all of his illustrating in the sf field. He could be called The Science Fiction Artist. Without Ed illustrating in the field there wouldn't be decent artwork in science fiction. Freas and Finlay may be better artists in their own rights, but if sf had to depend on them for the best illos it would be a long time waiting. Neither Freas nor Finlay turns out more than three or four illustrations a month. This doesn't even come close to the number that Emsh does a month.

Now for the people who say that his illustrations are no good. These people don't have any idea what they are talking about. Ed does most of his best cover art for INFINITY, as can be shown by looking at the following covers: June '56, Oct. '56, Dec. '57, April '57, and Sept. '57 for a few. Also for the few who don't read INFINITY regularly, they can go dig up a copy of the Feb. '57 issue of *F&SF*. If these people would look around they would see that over half of the covers done each month are done by none other than Ed Emsh. Sf is lucky to have an artist that will devote so much time to the field.

Just what in the world are lay figures?

Also for the people who are such fanatics on details, haven't they ever heard of an artistic license? Some scenes just wouldn't look right if they had to be done just as they are described in the story.

The figures that Ed draws look all right to me. I don't see where the people get the idea that they look so stiff or " . . . have just been kicked in the sitty . . . "

Ed Emsh is good and there is no getting around that. He may not be as good as Freas or Finlay but he is the best artist for sf and I hope to see many more of his covers on INFINITY.

The greatest new illustrator of the year is John Schoenherr, who in a couple of years may be at the top of the heap of the sf artists. He has a style of his own that will really develop into something in time. His cover for *Science Fiction Adventures* was terrific.

Now, in case you are wondering, I will tell you that INFINITY is No. 2 on my list, second only to *Science Fiction Adventures*.— Jack Jones, 6115 6th Avenue North, St. Petersburg, Florida.

∞

I belong to a group of what has been called everything from "intellagensia" to "heretical." Well anyway our last contribution to the corruption of the human mind was discovering the nature of the Universe.

It goes like this. Firstly everything breaks down into a cellular structure, which breaks down into molecular structure, which breaks down into atomic structure, which breaks down into the electronic particles, which breaks down into mesons, which are kinetic energy.

The question arises then, what is energy? Energy is motion. What is motion? Time.

We are then the expression (or end result) of the motion of time through space. Simple is it not? We thought you and your readers might be interested. We will answer any arguments that have any kind of background, cause we like to fight, or debate, or just plain argue.—Charles A. Grifas, 711 Webster, Bay City, Michigan.

Well, I'm glad we got that cleared up!—LTS

∞

May I add my voice to what in my humble opinion should be a clamor? First as I recall it there were Ayers and Pollini praising in the pages of *SFA* the most moving and worthy yarn yet published in that illustrious prozine, namely: "Mission to Oblivion." Now there's Mandell crying out in INFINITY for more from the humorous side of the same pen.

Of course, I'm shouting the praises of John Victor Peterson and looking forward hopefully to both the serious and the humorous, separate or mixed. If I were on the South Gate in '58 committee I'd plug for him as Guest of Honor on the basis of "Mission to Oblivion" alone.

INFINITY and *SFA* continue on a high level—but how about a higher level—how about more yarns in the hilarious tradition of "The Gently Orbiting Blonde" (yummy!) and "Second Census" (yak! yak!) or in the dead serious and so very human vein of "Mission to Oblivion." "Mission" cries for a sequel more than any "Chalice" yarn ever did. May we see it soon, please?—Rex A. Thissen, Chicago, Illinois.

You'll definitely get those humorous stories soon, and I'll see what can be done about the "Mission" sequel.—LTS.

∞

Though I thoroughly enjoyed the April INFINITY, especially "Leg. Forst.," I do think Damon Knight should try to review more books each month. He also gives a too comprehensive review which, I think, tends to take some of the fun out of reading the book, as in *Citizen of the Galaxy.*

The thing—and I do mean

thing—that really bugs me, though, is that ridiculous letter by Alma Hill. Miss Hill has obviously been frustrated by her high school art teacher. I can see no other reason for her opening her gigantic oral cavity and emitting some ninety-nine degree Fahrenheit atmosphere, of which she seems to have plenty of, at Ed Emsh and his mother. I suggest Miss Hill read *Fantasy and Science Fiction* if she doesn't want to have the illustrations discord with the text.

My personal opinion of Miss Hill's letter is *Ex nihilo nihil fit.* If Miss Hill does not know what this means, she can find it under "Foreign Words and Phrases" in any good dictionary.

One last thing. I like Emsh because he draws people and things that look like people and things. I also like Virgin Finlay for the same reason and Don Martin for his completely opposite approach. Please let me see these three in future issues. Thank you.—Michael Lypka, Jr., 25 Ontario Avenue, Plainview, New York.

∞

Not bad!

I am speaking, of course, about "Leg. Forst.," by Clifford D. Simak. It is not the best story that has ever appeared in INFINITY but it runs a close second as being the worst-written one that I liked best.

In "Feedback," there were several nice letters that I have never seen so very often in the other magazines. I believe that this was the best round of letters yet, and we're all getting the big ball rolled far, far out into deep regions of space at last.

Pray, tell me, somebody what possible place will the Ship of INFINITY, finally wind up at?—James W. Ayers, 609 First Street, Attalla, Alabama.

∞

I just finished the April INFINITY. I hope Clifford Simak murders you. Until I read it, I thought that "Leg. Forst." was about a Rock 'n' Roll Superman. Who made up that cover?

On second thought, I hope he only disables you. INFINITY isn't such a bad magazine. "Leg. Forst." was a darned good novelette. The short stories were all at least passable, and Knox's little gem has made me, finally into a Knox fan. Knox wasn't a bad author when he started writing, and by now he has developed into one of the best writers in the field.

Something is wrong with damon knight. He didn't pan a single book in this issue.

To enter the fray about knight, I heartily agree that knight is easily the ablest reviewer (or should I say critic) in the science-fiction field, but it is also true that he:

is no critic; he is God
plays unfairly
insults
should be psychoanalyzed
is doing wrong
betrays a great deal
lacks the milk of human kindness

and I do care! As a writer, I don't overly care for Helen M. Urban, but I'd hate to meet her. I don't care what Helen Urban learns about writing from knight —"Infinity's Choice" is no writers' school! Knight has a job to do, and it isn't teaching authors how to write. He is supposed to review books, and review them fairly. This issue, knight was so fair that I was shocked. He is also fair sometimes when panning a book, but (as with Matheson) he will often inject his personal feelings into a review. That's no way to review a book! If knight ever decides to go for that psychoanalysis he could use, I think he might do well to take Urban with him! —Leslie Gerber, 201 Linden Boulevard, Brooklyn 10, New York.

Since we are no longer publishing Damon Knight's book reviews, we won't run any more letters about him either. Sorry, fellows, but you'll have to find something else to fight about.—LTS

∞

Nothing about Ed Emsh this time around. I made my point in my last letter and I'll let it stand. Let's look at INFINITY from a literary standpoint.

Your policy of avoiding cliches, and even doing away with them, is working out well. Whenever I open an issue of INFINITY I know I'll be treated to 130 pages of original, excellent fiction and entertaining departments. Of course, I can't rightly say that I enjoy *everything* you publish, because I would be guilty of a gross falsehood. *But*—for the most part you have one of the best varieties of fiction to be found on the market. Your sub-title, "The Magazine of Tomorrow," is no exaggeration, either. (*It's extinct, though; too few readers dug it.—LTS*) Your constant exploration into new themes and exceptional treatments of older themes justifies your subtitle. Every turn of the page brings us readers into a new world of ideas; a world of the future that is not as impossible as many pessimists of science fiction would think.

The April issue was one of the best yet. I generally don't care for novelets. My preferences lie in short stories or full-length novels. However, "Wings of the Phoenix" was most enjoyable. The story itself was well-written, and I found Rocky a most intriguing character. One point, though! After having grown a new head, how could Rocky's

brain be expected to be identical to the one in the discarded head? It seems to me that his personality, intellect, and character would have been drastically modified.

"Leg. Forst." was slow in a number of places but this was offset to a good degree by the good handling of the story and the theme. "The Beast of Boredom's" theme fascinated me. Being trapped in a period of ten minutes of time is a challenging idea for a psychological study, and Smith handled it well. The other three stories were top-notch, well above the average. All in all, this issue was a superior one.

Glad to hear about the Infinity Awards. They ought to encourage some pretty good stuff from both old and new writers.—Tim Dumont, 30 Munchausen Avenue, Bristol, Connecticut.

∞

I laughed fit to bust over Timothy Dumont and myself, too. Of course all my information on how people faint is second-hand, quoted from an M.D. who once got teed off on the subject of stage, depicted, and neurotic faints, the mechanisms of. I have never fainted at all, personally, nor seen many happen. Those I did see loosened all joints as claimed by the M.D., but now you mention it, in one case the individual would have overbalanced to fall backwards, but it's impossible to be sure because, being right there, of course I made a grab and eased the fall, thus interfering with nature to that extent. A double dome like yourself, come to think of it; would that effect balance? But certainly a grab made by a worried neighbor would perturb the result. Favorably, one hopes, of course. However, what is this so-called gentleman doing for Ed Emsh and the lady in distress? Running for his worthless life, by jinks. I should think that Richard Wilson would really resent that treatment of his hero. Meanwhile, I do. He is a very cute hero . . . in the words/ideas part.

Lay figures are little dummies used around art schools for students who are advanced enough to tackle figure drawing and not yet skilled enough to work out the problems of perspective very well. Live models are better, of course, but exceedingly expensive. Perhaps lay figures are the best possible idea-source models for group combinations, especially floating in no-gravity, but they have some deficiencies too. Naturally, they cannot be constructed with joints capable of assuming all the positions possible to a living body. Also, in order to be movable, their joints are often too loose for them to stand unsupported.—Alma Hill, 14 Pleasant Street, Fort Kent, Maine.

WANTED

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